

# Kenai Peninsula Area – Units 7 & 15

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## PROPOSAL 59

### **5 AAC 85.025(1). Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.**

Shorten the hunting season for Kenai Mountain caribou (DC001) in Unit 7 as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(1)		
Unit 7 north of the Sterling Highway and west of the Seward Highway 1 caribou by drawing permit only; up to 500 permits may be issued	Aug. 10— <u>Sept. 20</u> [DEC. 31]	Aug. 10— <u>Sept. 20</u> [DEC. 31]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Currently, the season dates for Kenai Mountain caribou under permit DC001 are August 10 – December 31. The historical harvest during the later portion of the existing hunting season (October 1 – December 31) is relatively low, averaging less than two caribou per year with 250 permits issued. Changing the closure date to September 20 from December 31 shortens the season by three months but would likely have little impact on harvest rates. By closing the hunt on September 20, we would avoid harvesting animals during the rut and align season dates for all caribou hunts on the Kenai Peninsula.

The number of caribou in the Kenai Mountain herd has decreased significantly in recent years and is now approximately 125–150 animals, down from peak numbers of approximately 400 animals. Given this decline, only 25 permits are issued each year compared to the 250 permits per year issued in the past.

It is the intention of the Department of Fish and Game to maintain an adequate number of collared animals in the Kenai Mountain herd to continue monitoring herd numbers. The current season dates dictate that we conduct our collaring efforts in the spring when the caribou are in their poorest condition. This timing increases the probability of capture related mortalities. The shortened season will allow managers to conduct radio collaring work in the fall when cows are in their best condition.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F18-039)

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**PROPOSAL 60**

**5 AAC 85.040(3). Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat.**

Change the hunting seasons for goat in Units 7 and 15 as follows:

Mountain goat season  
Unit 7 and 15  
August 10 – September 30  
October 10 – October 24

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The current late season mountain goat hunt is November 1 – November 14. This falls during the rut when not only is the meat of billies likely to be unpalatable, but also when hunting pressure may disrupt breeding activity. Goats have a low reproductive rate and any disturbance during the rut may have negative impact on herd recruitment.

Moving the late season up to October 10 – October 24 will still allow the Department of Fish and Game to collect data from the early season and determine harvest numbers for the late hunt while increasing the likelihood of harvested goats being edible and decreasing potential disturbance during the rut.

**PROPOSED BY:** Dave Lyon (EG-F18-048)

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**PROPOSAL 61**

**5 AAC 85.040(3). Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat.**

Establish a new drawing hunt for goats near Seldovia in Unit 15C as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
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(3)

Unit 15(C), that portion beginning at the mouth of Jackalof Creek, then southwesterly along the shore of Kachemak Bay to the mouth of the Port Graham River, then southeasterly up the Port Graham River approximately 6 miles, then southerly up the south fork to the divide, then easterly across the divide to the main

drainage that flows into Windy Bay, then southeasterly down the creek to Windy Bay, then easterly along the shoreline to the mouth of Rocky River, then northerly up the Rocky River and Windy River to the divide separating Windy River from Jackalof Creek, then across that divide to Jackalof Creek, then down Jackalof Creek to the point of origin

**1 goat by drawing permit only; however, if a nanny is taken, the hunter is prohibited from taking a goat on the Kenai Peninsula for 5 regulatory years; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited; or**

**Aug. 10—Oct. 15 (General hunt only)**

**No open season**

1 goat by registration permit only; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited

Aug. 10—Oct. 15  
Nov. 1—Nov. 30

No open season.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Mountain goat population levels are increasing in the Seldovia hunt area located in Unit 15C, as documented by an increase in minimum count numbers. The Department of Fish and Game (department) has increased the number of registration permits available as the population has increased. These permits are currently only available in Seldovia, one specific day each year, and must be picked up in person. Harvest has not increased with increased permit quantities and in recent years all available permits have not been distributed. Establishing a drawing hunt in this area allows the department to issue permits during years the area can support additional harvest beyond current levels. By establishing a drawing permit option in this area, both hunter opportunity and harvest will increase.

For consistency within the unit and to increase future harvest opportunity, this proposal also requests the addition of a restriction on hunters who harvest a nanny. Hunters who harvest a nanny in the new drawing hunt would be prohibited from harvesting a goat on the Kenai Peninsula (Units 7 and 15) for five regulatory years. This regulation was adopted in 2009 for Unit 7 and the Remainder of Unit 15 and applied to both drawing and registration permits.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F18-043)

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**PROPOSAL 62**

**5 AAC 85.040(3). Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat.**

Separate the early and late season registration goat hunts for the Seldovia and Port Graham hunt areas in Unit 15C as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(3)  Unit 15(C), that portion beginning at the mouth of Jackalof Creek, then southwesterly along the shore of Kachemak Bay to the mouth of the Port Graham River, then southeasterly up the Port Graham River approximately 6 miles, then southerly up the south fork to the divide, then easterly across the divide to the main drainage that flows into Windy Bay, then southeasterly down the creek to Windy Bay, then easterly along the shoreline to the mouth of Rocky River, then northerly up the Rocky River and Windy River to the divide separating Windy River from Jackalof Creek, then across that divide to Jackalof Creek, then down Jackalof Creek to the point of origin	Aug. 10—Oct. 15 [NOV. 1—NOV. 30]	No open season.
<b><u>1 goat by registration permit only; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited; or</u></b>  <b><u>1 goat by registration permit only; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited;</u></b>	<b><u>Nov. 1—Nov. 30</u></b>	No open season.
Unit 15(C), that portion beginning at the mouth		

of the Port Graham River, then southeasterly up the Port Graham River approximately 6 miles, then southerly up the south fork to the divide, then easterly across the divide to the main drainage that flows into Windy Bay, then southeasterly down the creek to Windy Bay, then along the southern shore of Windy Bay, then westerly along the shore of the Gulf of Alaska and around the tip of the Kenai Peninsula and easterly to the point of origin

1 goat by registration permit only; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited; or

Aug. 10—Oct. 15  
[NOV. 1—NOV. 30]

Aug. 10—Oct. 15

**1 goat by registration permit only; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited;**

**Nov. 1—Nov. 30**

No open season.

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**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Currently, the early and late season registration goat hunts for both the Seldovia (RG364) and Port Graham (RG365) areas are listed in regulation with season dates of August 10 – October 15 and November 1 – November 30. The intent of this proposal is to clearly differentiate between the two registration hunt seasons for each hunt (RG364 and RG365), which will allow for independent management of each. This will create separate hunt numbers for early and late season hunts, rather than the current system, which uses the same hunt number for both. Under the current regulation, permits for the later season in each hunt area may be over or under issued because harvest reports from the early season hunt have not been received prior to opening the late season. To resolve this issue, separating the hunts in regulation will allow the Department of Fish and Game (department) to identify the early season and late season hunts as distinct hunts and manage them for full permit allocations.

The Board of Game (board) has made a positive customary and traditional use finding for goats in these hunt areas within Unit 15C and found that 7–10 goats are reasonably necessary for subsistence. The board will also need to determine if the proposed regulations continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence.

In addition to the regulatory change proposed here, the department will be adjusting the date of issue for the early season registration permits in this hunt (Unit 15C, RG364) from the current issuance date in mid-July to an earlier date in mid-June. Permits for the early season hunt are available in person in Seldovia only. The new issuance date will fall in the regulatory year prior to the hunt taking place, but is intended to increase participation in the registration permit hunt. Late season permits will remain available online, and in Anchorage, Palmer, Homer and Soldotna department offices.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-041)

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### **PROPOSAL 63**

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

Change the resident bag limit for moose in Unit 15 and remove the road closure criteria in Unit 15C as follows:

Unit 15A, B, and C: Spike, fork, 50-inch or four brow tines  
Removal of road closure criteria in Unit 15C

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

- 1) Successful management for moose harvest resulting from current regulations.
- 2) ADF&G surveys report a high bull:cow ratio. This supports an opportunity to harvest more bulls.
- 3) Harvesting of fork, spike bulls increases harvest opportunity for Alaska residents.
- 4) Current regulations characterize a trophy hunt vs. an opportunity to harvest game food.
- 5) Law enforcement personnel in the field manage compliance with regulations with cooperation of many land managers across Unit 15.
- 6) Including an additional spike-fork with the current regulation of four brow tines and over 50-inches will increase harvest opportunity and promote sustainable stock.

If the problem is not solved, the sustainable environment may not be able to sustain large populations of moose. After the last significant change in harvest regulations, land managers found over 30 moose that had starved during the winter because the population exceeded the sustainable carrying capacity of the area. Adjustments in proven harvest thresholds predicated on the management of fish and wildlife stocks, genetic diversity, and trait expressions within the population managed according to the principals of fish and wildlife management. This follows the Alaska Constitution and allows residents to utilize resources that are expected to be made available. The Southern Peninsula advisory committees simply do not access tracts of land and are largely unaware of the changes identified by local observers. Developing higher moose numbers can be achieved through harvest management and a balance with sustainable practices of wildlife management that includes suitable harvest related to actual carrying capacity. Management of moose stocks is not a law enforcement issue. This is an issue that is predicated on the management of fish and wildlife stocks, genetic diversity, and trait expressions within the population managed according to the principals of fish and wildlife management.

If adopted, the moose will benefit and no one will suffer. A similar harvest criteria developed by others maintained successful populations and successful harvest yield for over twenty years.

Other solutions considered: Hunting with a normal state hunting license is not a “subsistence” harvest that is managed by the state. The state has clearly demonstrated that sustainable criteria similar to this proposed change has been successful for periods extending for over twenty years with no notable change in land use or ecology.

**PROPOSED BY:** Ninilchik Traditional Council (EG-F18-056)  
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**PROPOSAL 64**

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

Change the resident bag limit for moose in Unit 15 to include spike-fork bulls as follows:

ANTLER RESTRICTIONS UNIT 15: **Spike-fork moose are legal in Unit 15.** (Spike moose and four brow tines are legal in Unit 15)

The bull:cow ratio is too high in Unit 15. Rather than harvesting cows, we would rather relax the size of the antlers. It was hard to be sure if the moose was a spike or not sometimes. This resulted in the waste of moose that were not reported. This will increase the harvest of bull moose.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Moose antler restrictions: Change the regulation on spike-fork back to what it was. Allow the harvest of spike-fork moose in Unit 15.

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-039)  
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**PROPOSAL 65**

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

Change the bag limit for moose in Units 7 and 15 from four to three brow tines as follows:

The simple fix here to bring into proper management of moose on the Kenai Peninsula is to allow for a harvest of 50-inch, three brow tine, spike regulations. The required online class to hunt on the Kenai should be modified to reflect these changes.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Several years ago, the Board of Game changed the regulations to 50-inch, four brow tine, spike-only in most of Units 7 and 15. This has worked to increase the bull:cow ratio. We would like to see the legal bull regulation modified. The current bull:cow ratios are higher than optimal.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-050)  
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**PROPOSAL 66**

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

Change the resident bag limit for moose in Unit 15 from four to three brow tines as follows:

**Unit 15 moose antler restrictions:** A legal bull moose is one that has at least three brow tines or is 50 inches. (A legal moose is one that has four brow tines or is 50 inches.)

The bull to cow ratio is too high. We want more bull moose harvested. Rather than pass a moose with three brow tines because a hunter is not sure if it is 50 inches or more, a hunter could harvest one with three brow tines regardless of the size of the antlers. Thus, more bulls would be harvested. Also, there would be less moose left to waste from hunters who do not report an under-sized moose.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** ANTLER RESTRICTIONS, MOOSE: We wish to change the requirement of four brow tines to three brow tines in Unit 15.

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-040)  
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**PROPOSAL 67**

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

Change the resident bag limit for moose in Units 15A and 15B from spike-fork to four points on one palm or three brow tines as follows:

I urge you to consider having no spike-fork hunting and go to either four points on one palm or three brow tines

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The spike-fork hunting in Units 15A and 15B.

My name is Oliver Jackson, I am a 17-year-old. It has come to my attention that it has been eight years since my mother, grandfather, or anyone else in my family has gotten a moose. I would say the reason the dates and regulations changed was to prevent the moose population from decreasing. Now, by the time September 1 rolls around, most of the moose are bigger than a spike and smaller than four brow tines/50 inches. Therefore, many hunters in Unit 15A and 15B do not get to harvest a moose unless they are willing and able to travel to a different unit. With that in mind, I urge you to consider having no spike-fork hunting and go to either four points on one palm or three brow tines. The State of Alaska's statue says it is illegal to wanton waste any resource in this state. I believe killing a small spike-fork moose is wasteful because that moose, two or three years later, would feed two to three times the amount of people.

Thank you for your time.

**PROPOSED BY:** Oliver Jackson (EG-F18-014)  
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**PROPOSAL 68**

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

Change the resident bag limit for moose in Units 15A and 15B from spike-fork to five or more points on one palm and shorten the seasons as follows:

My solution is to have five or more points on one palm or the other. No spike-fork hunting. And no brow tine requirements. My reasoning is with three brow tines when the brush is thick and the fireweed gets six feet tall, it's too hard to distinguish a legal moose. Too many are shot and wasted. Shooting spike-fork size moose is wasteful to the resource. Let that moose grow and two or three years later that moose will give the hunter two or three times more meat. In addition, I would like to see the bow season cut to five days and the center fire season to ten days until the moose population in 15A and B rebounds.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The spike-fork hunting in Units 15A and 15B and the waste of the resource.

**PROPOSED BY:** Richard McGahan, Sr. (EG-F18-015)

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**PROPOSAL 69**

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

Open a general season hunt for moose in Unit 15B and eliminate the drawing hunt as follows:

Trophy area 15B: **All of subunit 15B is open as a general hunt area.** (Remove the trophy hunt designation in 15B.)

We believe there are few trophy moose there now. The bull:cow ratio is high. More bulls need to be harvested. The trails are beginning to be overgrown and fewer people are going there now. More opportunity would be given to hunters.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Change the designation of that portion of Unit 15B north of Tustemena Lake that is now a trophy area for moose and open it as a general hunt.

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-041)

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**PROPOSAL 70**

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

Open a general season hunt for moose in Unit 15B and eliminate the drawing hunt as follows:

The easy solution here is to open this area up to a harvest ticket area. Allowing people access to this area to have a true wilderness hunt is a positive thing for Alaskans. Keeping a 50-inch three brow tine spike regulation here would allow for proper management of a healthy bull:cow ratio. This may help a little in the crowding of hunters on the rest of the Kenai Peninsula. Also a few more predators may be taken while hunters were in the field during a moose hunt.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The draw-only area for moose hunting in Unit 15B should be removed. Currently, to have this area reserved for a small number of hunters no longer is justified. The moose population in Unit 15B has declined to the point that it is no longer trophy hunting area due to lack of moose numbers. The lack of moose hunters in this area has had some unintended consequences. One of the issues causing low moose populations is low calf numbers. These low numbers are due to predation of calves by bears. There is very little bear harvest in the area. The trails in Unit 15B are also grown over because of lack of use. We believe that this should be opened back up to a harvest ticket hunt.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-049)  
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**PROPOSAL 71**

**5 AAC 85.045(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Establish a general season moose hunt for Unit 15B east and eliminate the drawing hunt as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(13)		
...		
Unit 15(B), that portion bounded by a line running from the mouth of Shantatalik Creek, Tustumena Lake, northeastward to the head of the westernmost fork of Funny River; then downstream along the westernmost fork of Funny River to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge boundary; then east along the refuge boundary to its junction with the Kenai River; then eastward along the south side of the Kenai River and Skilak Lake; then south along the western side of Skilak River, Skilak Glacier, and Harding Icefield; then west along the Unit 15(B)	[SEPT. 1—SEPT. 20] [(GENERAL HUNT ONLY)] [SEPT. 26—OCT. 15] [(GENERAL HUNT ONLY)]	[SEPT. 1—SEPT. 20] [SEPT. 26—OCT. 15]

boundary to the mouth of  
Shantatalik Creek

[1 BULL WITH 50-INCH ANTLERS OR ANTLERS WITH 3 OR MORE BROW TINES ON ONE SIDE, BY DRAWING PERMIT ONLY; UP TO 100 PERMITS MAY BE ISSUED; OR]

**1 bull with spike or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, by bow and arrow only; or**

**Aug. 22–Aug. 29**  
**(General hunt only)**

**1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, by bow and arrow only; or**

**Aug. 22–Aug. 29**

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

**Sept. 1–Sept. 25**  
**(General hunt only)**

**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?** Unit 15B east has been under restrictive permit hunt regulations since 1977. Access to this area is limited due to Kenai National Wildlife Refuge travel restrictions. The 2014 Funny River Fire substantially changed habitat in this area. Moose forage availability has increased since the fire, improving the quality of moose habitat, which will likely lead to increased production of moose. A population estimate was conducted in 2017 producing a point estimate of 837 moose (95% CI; 669-1004). Establishing a general season hunt for Unit 15B east with general season antler restrictions that mirror other portions of Unit 15B and general season restrictions of Unit 15C (currently one bull with spike or 50-inch antlers, or antlers with four or more brow tines on one side for residents, or a bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with four or more brow tines on one side for nonresidents) will provide hunters an increased opportunity to harvest moose as the population increases. Due to the restricted access in this area it is unlikely that an overharvest of bulls will occur. Liberalizing the current permit hunt restrictions was considered for this area, but such an action would not increase hunter opportunity.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F18-046)

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## **PROPOSAL 72**

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

Change the resident moose hunt structure in Unit 15C as follows:

- 1) Convert season from general hunt to a registration hunt, as per existing Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) protocols for in-person registration hunts elsewhere in the state. Open to residents only with restriction: hunters who obtain a permit for this hunt are ineligible to hunt bull moose in any other unit during the calendar year.
- 2) Split season dates concurrent with start date of the late season controlled use hunt period.  
First season: September 1 through September 14.  
Second season: September 15 through September 25.
- 3) Limit harvest in first season to: quota set annually by ADF&G, as per management objectives, using existing ADF&G protocols for registration hunts elsewhere in the state.  
Second season harvest: No quota
- 4) First season bag limit: “any bull” with more than a forked antler on one side.  
Second season bag limit: bull with minimum of 50-inch outside spread, or minimum of four brow tines on at least one antler.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** 1) Unacceptably high sublegal harvest resulting from current legal bull bag limit.

- 2) ADF&G annual bull harvest objectives have not been met for many years, but ADF&G surveys report a high bull:cow ratio. This supports an opportunity to harvest more bulls.
- 3) Limited resident opportunity to harvest a legal bull for food/subsistence. A large number of hunters are competing for a low number of legal bulls and are unsuccessful.
- 4) Harvesting yearlings, fork or spike bulls minimizes the meat yield of the moose and can adversely impact the ability to sustain future bull harvest numbers.
- 5) Current regulations characterize a trophy hunt vs. an opportunity to harvest game food.
- 6) Law enforcement personnel in the field are unable to manage compliance with regulations.
- 7) A percentage of hunters want to maintain the current bag limit or antler restrictions, but a majority wants to put a moose in the freezer.

What may happen if these problems are not solved: Game management objectives will not be met.

Area resident hunter harvest opportunity will continue to be compromised by bag limit restrictions and by too many hunters competing for this limited resource.

The quality of the hunting experience and our subsistence-based dependence on this food source will continue to be compromised by these factors and the sublegal hunting activity resulting from pressure to harvest a legal bull.

Compliance and enforcement demands will continue to exceed the capacity of law enforcement personnel and resources. The requirement for hunters to certify that they viewed and passed a legal bull moose orientation video certainly did very little to reduce the frequency of sublegal kills in 2017.

1) More than 20% of our annual bull harvest is sublegal. This is a lost resource. This moose herd has been under intensive management, but our ADF&G biologists are recommending that this classification be lifted. With current antler restrictions (bag limit), management harvest objectives are not being met and our regulations do not reflect this. Too many hunters are victims of failure to read their tape measures correctly or poor eye sight when counting brow tines or estimating antler spread, creating an environment which overloads our law enforcement in the field. This results in their lost opportunity to harvest food and subjection to a misdemeanor offense and fine.

2) Southern Peninsula advisory committees continue to support measures to sustain higher harvest numbers than what we have experienced for more than a decade. The priority has been to be able to harvest a moose for food and at the same time provide an opportunity to harvest a mature bull in the later season. The current state bag limit restrictions and the objectives upon which they are based are in conflict with the fact that communities within Unit 15C are federally recognized as subsistence users of this game resource.

3) Restricting the yearling harvest to spikes-only and mature bulls to minimum 50 inches or four brow tines were efforts to reduce pressure on and sustain an acceptable number of harvestable bulls as well as to manage bull:cow ratios. If we were growing a herd of cattle, we wouldn't harvest yearlings nor would we only harvest old bulls.

This proposal improves the quality of the resource harvested because local area hunter opportunity to harvest a legal moose will increase with a registration hunt with proposed restrictions and a change in the bag limit. ADF&G harvest objectives can be met and controlled. Simplification of the definition of legal bull will relieve the hunter and law enforcement personnel. Splitting the season will offer more opportunity to harvest a meat bull in the first season and help ensure maximum opportunity for a mature bull in the late season controlled use hunt period.

Those likely to benefit: Local area residents wanting increased opportunity to harvest game for subsistence, late season trophy hunters, ADF&G moose population managers, and law enforcement and compliance personnel.

Those likely to suffer: Nonresidents and resident hunters who live outside of the area who are not present during the registration period, as well all hunters unwilling to sacrifice eligibility to hunt elsewhere during the same year will suffer.

Other solutions considered and reasons rejected:

1) Considered not splitting the season but addressed concern that quota could be met prior to the late season controlled use hunt period, which would deprive hunters who traditionally hunt during that time and target mature trophy bulls as the rut begins.

2) Considered capping number of permits. A residency requirement does not significantly reduce the number of hunters in the field nor prevent this “any bull” hunt from becoming targeted by hunters residing outside of the area. Capping the number of permits is a matter of using statistics to achieve desired harvest levels rather than providing opportunity to area hunters willing to sacrifice eligibility elsewhere in order to support the objectives of these proposed regulation changes.

3) Establishing our eligibility for a Community Subsistence Harvest is an alternative which addresses several components of this proposal, but simultaneously continuing our current general hunt and bag limit for all other hunters does not address any of the other problems cited as reasons for this proposal.

**PROPOSED BY:** Michael Schuster (HQ-F18-016)  
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**PROPOSAL 73**

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

Change the resident moose hunt structure in Unit 15C as follows:

Moose hunting in Unit 15C shall be an open registration hunt for residents only. Hunters who register for this hunt may not hunt bull moose in any other unit during the calendar year. Registration shall be done at Department of Fish and Game (department) offices in Unit 15C as designated by the department. The department shall cap the number of bulls allowed to be harvested. Successful hunters shall report their harvest within two days. The season shall be September 1 – September 25 or until closed by emergency order when the cap is reached. Legal bull moose are any bull except a spike or a fork on one or both sides. (These are saved for recruitment and do not have much meat on them.)

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** High bull:cow ratio, waste of sublegal bulls, and low success for meat hunters. Too restrictive for meat hunters. Prohibiting spike or fork moose will allow the harvest of more mature and larger moose and will achieve the bull:cow ratio desired sooner.

**PROPOSED BY:** Steve Vanek (EG-F18-042)  
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## **PROPOSAL 74**

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

Open a resident drawing hunt for moose in Unit 15C as follows:

Unit 15C, Resident Hunters:

1 antlered bull, by drawing permit only; up to 200 permits may be issued.

This number was arrived at by adding the 142 moose current harvest average plus 160 (200 draw permits at a conservatively high success rate of 80%) equals 302 moose, squarely within the harvest objective of 200–350. This hypothetical calculation includes the entire harvest structure.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Provide additional harvest opportunity due to high moose population in Unit 15C. Currently, Unit 15C is above the intensive management (IM) population objective, far below IM harvest objective, and the bull:cow ratio is very high; substantial opportunity is thus being underutilized. There is adequate room to add 200 “any antlered bull” draw permits, and these would work well alongside current selective harvest strategy (SHS) regulations to balance the herd and provide prime opportunity in a high use area.

- The latest point estimate as of this writing for moose in Unit 15C shows a population of 3,529; above the IM objective of 2500–3500.
- Last five years harvest average is 142 moose; well below harvest objective for Unit 15C of 200–350 moose. Of those 142, 27 were cows taken under DM549 and 118 were general season bulls. Hunters are excited about seeing many bulls but frustrated because most don't meet the current requirement of spike, 50-inch, or four brow tines.
- Bull:cow ratios have increased steadily from 19 to 55 bulls per 100 cows in the last five years, with total moose remaining roughly constant or increasing. An adequate and sustainable ratio is normally considered to range about 25–30 bulls per 100 cows; about half of Unit 15C's current ratio of 55:100 cows. One bull can service dozens of cows.
- Current regulatory hunt structure in Unit 15C consists of spike/50-inch or four brow tines for the general bull hunt, along with DM549 antlerless hunt (25–30 cows taken annually) and the targeted hunt (yet to be authorized) for highway corridor during heavy snow years.

We appear to have a substantial number of additional bulls available for harvest. High bull:cow ratios can lead to stressed moose populations as more bulls than necessary for the herd's productivity compete for browse and habitat with the future of the herd: the cows and calves. Nutritional stress, while truly a factor of population, may also be exemplified by percent calves (last five years high 20, currently 11) and lower twinning rate. Additionally, for the bulls, mating stress and less nutrition on a per-animal basis may produce less antler growth, which puts more mid-size “illegal class” bulls in the population, compounding the situation of too many bulls competing for browse and perhaps also exacerbating illegal take with its inherent enforcement, prosecution and regulation costs. Longer term nutritional stress may play out in genetics. The Unit 15C moose population is over objective yet the harvest is less than half of its objective. This prime freezer-filling opportunity should be utilized to provide maximum benefit to hunters.

We think the population will respond favorably, we will stay within harvest objectives, and hunters will be happy with a better chance at winter meat if we offer up to (at Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) discretion) 200 “any antlered bull” permits by drawing in addition to the existing hunt structure.

Other solutions were considered to add opportunity and bring down the bull to cow ratio: A registration “any bull” hunt would be more difficult for ADF&G to manage in-season and make Alaska Wildlife Trooper enforcement more complicated. It would surely necessitate small window “hunt periods;” these are undesirable due to traditional family camp activity and also to ethical moose harvesting weather, which is spotty at best in the warm maritime climate of Unit 15C. A return to more liberal selective harvest strategy (SHS) antler restrictions (add forked antler and reduce to 3 brow tines/50-inch) was rejected due to overly adequate bull:100 cow ratio (indeed, the SHS may be working TOO well). Removal of the existing cow hunt makes some mathematical sense with respect to sex ratio, but removed from consideration due to popularity, low harvest (25–30 cows/ year), and is only a very small portion of Unit 15C in suburban Homer. Changing the entire general harvest ticket hunt to allow “any antlered bull” would be too liberal, resulting in heavy localized overharvest even if the season is drastically shortened (undesirable again due to weather and loss of opportunity to hunt). Concerns of nonlocal competition in the draw (which is lawful) have merit, but we don’t think a big factor with other “any bull” hunt opportunities elsewhere around the road system offering enticement to traveling hunters.

Additional prime moose harvest opportunity can be safely implemented in Unit 15C by adopting this proposal adding up to 200 “any antlered bull” draw permits to the existing harvest structure. This will bring the harvest up closer to objective, bring down the bull:cow ratio, help the overall health of the herd and put an additional hundred thousand pounds of meat in Alaskans’ freezers. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this proposal.

**PROPOSED BY:** Homer Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-044)  
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**PROPOSAL 75**

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

Open an archery and muzzleloader permit hunt for moose Unit 15C as follows:

One moose by permit only. The harvest of cows with calves is prohibited. Up to 50 archery permits and up to 50 muzzleloader permits may be issued. No more than 10% the permits may be allocated to nonresident hunters. All applicants must hold a hunter education certification, bow hunter applicants must hold a bow hunter certification and muzzle loader applicants must hold a muzzle loader certification.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** To provide additional opportunity to harvest moose in Unit 15C using archery and muzzle loaders. There is currently a harvestable surplus of moose in Unit 15C that is being underutilized. Unit 15C is an intensive management area and the current intensive management harvest objectives are not being met. If nothing is done, we will continue to miss out on the opportunity to harvest moose and intensive

management objectives will continue to go unmet. In addition, if the population continues to grow, we run the risk of over-browsing our habitat, which would lead to a population decline and reduced hunter opportunity in this unit.

**PROPOSED BY:** Homer Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-055)  
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**PROPOSAL 76**

**5 AAC 85.045(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Establish an “any bull” drawing hunt in Unit 15C as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(13)		
...		
Unit 15(C), that portion south of the south fork of the Anchor River and northwest of Kachemak Bay		
<b>RESIDENT HUNTERS</b>		
1 bull with spike 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; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the nonresident drawing hunt; or	Oct. 20—Nov. 20	
1 moose by targeted permit only, <b>or</b>	Oct. 15—Mar. 31	
<b><u>1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 200 permits may be issued</u></b>	<b><u>Sept. 1—Sept. 25 (General hunt only)</u></b>	

**in combination with the remainder of Unit 15(C)**

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 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the nonresident drawing hunt; or

Oct. 20—Nov. 20

Remainder of 15(C)

RESIDENT HUNTERS

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

Sept. 1—Sept. 25  
(General Hunt only)

1 moose by targeted permit only, **or**

Oct. 15—Mar. 31

**1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 200 permits may be issued in combination with that portion south of the south fork of the Anchor River and northwest of Kachemak Bay**

**Sept. 1—Sept. 25**  
**(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?** Moose harvest in Unit 15C has been below or just within the lower end of the Intensive Management (IM) objectives (200–

350 moose) since changes to the legal antler requirement were implemented in 2011 and 2013. Currently, moose population estimates in the same area are at the upper end of the IM population objective (2,500–3,500) according to a February 2017 geospatial population estimation (GSPE) census (3,529, 95% confidence interval 2,769–4,289). The bull:cow ratio in the traditional composition count area has also increased substantially since reaching a low of nine bulls:100 cows in 2010. The bull:cow ratio in this same area was estimated at 46 bulls:100 cows in 2015, 40 bulls:100 cows in 2016 and 55 bulls:100 cows in 2017. The management objective for this area is 25 bulls:100 cows. Under the current antler restrictions in Unit 15C it is unlikely that IM harvest objectives will be achieved on an annual basis. Adding an “any bull” drawing permit hunt will provide the opportunity to harvest additional moose while the population and bull:cow ratios are high. Permit numbers (ranging from zero to 200) will be adjusted annually to reflect current population numbers and composition status. If no changes are made to the current hunt structure, harvest will likely remain below IM objectives during a time period when Department of Fish and Game census and composition data indicate the moose population is at the high end of the IM population objective, and also above the management objective for bull:cow ratio. A drawing permit with an “any bull” bag limit will also provide a new opportunity for hunters with reduced potential to harvest an illegal animal.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-054)  
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**PROPOSAL 77**

**5 AAC 85.045(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Establish a drawing hunt for antlerless moose in Unit 15C north of the south fork of the Anchor River as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(13)		

...

Remainder of 15(C)

RESIDENT HUNTERS

1 bull with spike or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; or	Sept. 1—Sept. 25 (General Hunt only)
1 moose by targeted permit only, <u>or</u>	Oct. 15—Mar. 31

**1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued.**

**Oct. 20—Nov. 20**

**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?** Current moose population levels in Unit 15C indicate that this area can sustain additional harvest. Creating an additional late season antlerless drawing permit hunt will allow for increased harvest opportunity for residents while the population is at high levels. The number of permits issued annually (ranging from zero to 100) would be adjusted to meet current population numbers and status. A similar antlerless moose hunt currently exists in Unit 15C south of the south fork of the Anchor River and northwest of Kachemak Bay (DM549) and is open to both residents and nonresidents.

Moose harvest in Unit 15C has been below or just within the lower end of the Intensive Management (IM) objectives (200–350 moose) since changes to the legal antler requirement were implemented in 2011 and 2013. Current moose population estimates are at the upper end of the IM population objective (2,500–3,500). In February 2017, a geospatial population estimate (GSPE) census was conducted in the northern portion of Unit 15C (north of Kachemak Bay) and resulted in a population estimate of 3,529 moose (95% confidence interval (CI): range 2,769–4,289), of which 19% (95% CI: 14–24) were calves. This equates to a density of approximately three moose/mi<sup>2</sup> in the census area. Fall composition counts in core count areas during November 2017 provided a bull ratio of 55 bulls:100 cows. If no changes are made to the current hunt structure, additional harvest opportunity will be missed and harvest will likely remain below IM harvest objectives during a time period when Department of Fish and Game census data indicates moose populations are at the high end of the IM population objective.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-052)  
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**PROPOSAL 78**

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

Establish resident drawing hunts for “any bull” moose in Units 15 and 7 as follows:

We would like to see a draw hunt within each individual unit on the Kenai allowing “any bull” tags to be offered on a resident-only draw hunt. The number of tags can be changed in each unit/subunit by the Department of Fish and Game to help attain healthy bull:cow ratios and allow for additional harvest when warranted.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Currently, the bull:cow ratios for moose on the Kenai Peninsula are not within management goals. The harvest of more bulls when the bull numbers are higher than desired increases efficiency in the moose population. Allowing harvest of additional bulls is warranted when the bull:cow ratio is out of desired ratios.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-051)  
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**PROPOSAL 79**

**5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements.**

Require hunter education for all hunters participating in Unit 15C drawing hunts as follows:

All hunters participating in a draw hunt in subunit 15C are required to take a hunter certification course prior to participating in the hunt.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Under current regulations, hunters born before January 1, 1986 are not required to take hunters education in order to participate in hunting activities in Alaska. Hunters education is a basic safety course that helps ensure all hunters are acting in a safe and legal manner. In Unit 15C increased human activity on the landscape is making it more important than ever for hunters to be acting in a safe manner. We would like to require all hunters take hunters education prior to participating in any draw hunts in this subunit.

**PROPOSED BY:** Homer Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-043)  
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**PROPOSAL 80**

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

Change the Hope/Palmer Creek Valley area general season moose hunt in Unit 7 to an archery-only permit hunt as follows:

The suggestion is to change the Hope/Palmer Creek area into a weapons-restricted draw hunt area with 2–4 tags.

*One bull by bow and arrow only, with a spike on at least one side or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side. By PERMIT.*

This follows the model set in other multi-use areas (Eklutna, Birchwood, Ship Creek, etc.) and still allows hunting access to this wonderful corner of Alaska.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** In 2011, the town of Hope and the Palmer Creek Valley were opened to general season moose hunting. The result is heavy hunting pressure on the town of Hope and the Palmer Creek Valley. A small community just an hour and twenty minutes from Anchorage, accessible by road, with limited fish and game enforcement, the local community and local moose population are suffering from heavy hunting

traffic. Hiking, biking, berry picking, camping, mining, and hunting are all enjoyed in the valley by a wide cross section of the local and Alaskan community.

Sadly, the Palmer Creek drainage in particular is getting dangerous. As an avid hunter and naturalist, I count on fish and game to fill my freezer every summer. Last fall, while calling moose for a family member, a vehicle stopped on the road above us. I stepped from behind the alder and waved at the truck. The truck left. I resumed calling, almost immediately the truck came back. This time, the driver balanced his rifle across the hood of his vehicle; looking through my binoculars I saw him sighted on me! I dropped to the ground, removed a game bag from my pack and waved it at the hunter in an attempt to show that I was not an acceptable target.

**PROPOSED BY:** Brendan Maguire (EG-F18-011)

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**PROPOSAL 81**

**5 AAC 92.052. Discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures.**

Require blaze orange be worn by moose hunters on Kalgin Island in Unit 15B as follows:

Recommend that all moose hunters on Kalgin Island be required to wear blaze orange on upper half of body.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Increased safety risk resulting from failure of State of Alaska to enact possible regulatory measures which would contribute to safer hunting environment. Of concern is the increased risk of hunting accident fatalities and injuries incurred on Kalgan Island as a result of heavy timber and allowance of killing of any moose (excluding cows with calf). Reported deaths of two hunters in past is of concern.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jack Polster (EJ-F18-105)

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**PROPOSAL 82**

**5 AAC 085.045(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season on Kalgin Island in Unit 15B as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
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(13)

...

Unit 15(B), Kalgin Island

1 moose per regulatory year,  
by registration permit only

Aug. 20—Sept. 20

Aug. 20—Sept. 20

...

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually by the Board of Game (board). The current regulation for hunting moose on Kalgin Island in Unit 15B allows hunters to harvest antlerless moose with the goal of reducing the population to the management objective.

In response to concerns that the moose population on Kalgin Island had exceeded the island's carrying capacity and due to deteriorating habitat conditions, the board established a drawing permit hunt for antlerless moose in 1995. In a further attempt to reduce the number of moose on the island, the board established a registration hunt (RM572) for any moose in 1999. Despite these measures to reduce moose numbers, moose remain abundant on the island and continue to exceed the management objective.

During the most recent moose survey, Department of Fish and Game (department) staff counted 85 moose on Kalgin Island in March 2018. This count exceeded the population objective of 20–40 moose.

The "any moose" registration hunt is recommended to provide additional mortality on this predator-free island population. A registration hunt also allows the department to continue gathering biological information from specimens provided by successful hunters. The difficult hunting conditions and limited access will minimize the danger of over-harvest.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-042)  
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**PROPOSAL 83**

**5 AAC 85.045(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 15C as follows:

This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt for the Homer benchland and the targeted, antlerless hunt along the Sterling Highway in Unit 15C.

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
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(13)

...

Unit 15(C), that portion south of the south fork of the Anchor River and northwest of Kachemak Bay

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with spike 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; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the nonresident drawing hunt: or

Oct. 20—Nov. 20

1 moose by targeted permit only,

Oct. 15—Mar. 31

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 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; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the resident drawing hunt

Oct. 20—Nov. 20

Remainder of Unit 15(C)

RESIDENT HUNTERS

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

Sept. 1—Sept. 25  
(General hunt only)

1 moose by targeted permit only,

Oct. 15—Mar. 31

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?** The antlerless moose season for the Homer benchland (DM549) and the targeted hunt (AM550) along the Sterling Highway in 15C would be reauthorized for the 2019–2020 hunting season.

**Background:** Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually. The Homer benchland in Unit 15C that encompasses the hunt boundary of DM549 often holds high moose densities in winters when deep snow pushes the moose down into human-populated areas. Even without deep snow, moose die due to malnutrition and negative interactions with humans are common as moose become more aggressive in their search for food around human residences.

In February 2017, a geospatial population estimation (GSPE) census was conducted in the northern portion of Unit 15C (north of Kachemak Bay) and resulted in a population estimate of 3,529 moose (95% confidence interval (CI): range 2,769–4,289), of which 19% (95% CI: 14–24) were calves. This equates to a density of approximately three moose/mi<sup>2</sup> in the census area. Density estimates for the winter are difficult to determine because the areas available to moose vary depending on snowfall, but winter density is consistently higher. Fall composition counts in core count areas during November 2017 provided a bull ratio of 55 bulls:100 cows. Fifty permits were issued in each of the last ten years, resulting in an average harvest of 23 cows annually.

The purpose of AM550 is to allow for the harvest of antlerless moose along the Sterling Highway in Unit 15C during the winter if they pose a significant threat to highway vehicles. On average, 61 known animals are killed each year in vehicle collisions in Unit 15C. The Department of Fish and Game will decide when and where permits will be issued during the hunt period. The hunt is administered through a registration permit. The number of permits issued each year will depend on conditions and it is possible no permits will be issued in some years.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-050)  
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**PROPOSAL 84**

**5 AAC 85.055. Hunting season and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

Open a resident, archery-only season for Dall sheep in Unit 15 as follows:

Unit 15: Archery only, full-curl ram (harvest ticket)

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Would like archery-only hunt for sheep in advance of rifle season on the Round Mountain area. Full-curl (harvest ticket).

**PROPOSED BY:** Robert Gauden (HQ-F18-032)  
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**PROPOSAL 85**

**5 AAC 85.015. Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear.**

Reduce the resident bag limit for black bear in Units 7 and 15 as follows:

Black Bear

Unit 7 south of the city limits of Seward at 60° 04' 58" N. latitude, and Unit 15 south of the Bradley River, Bradley Lake and Kachemak Creek.

Two bears: one between January 1 – May 31, one between June 1 – December 31

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The area described was managed under this regulation prior to adoption of the three-bear anytime bag limit in 2011.

Since that time there has been increasing pressure both from transported and resident hunters and an anecdotal decrease in bear sightings in both spring and fall.

As this area is primarily hunted by residents looking for meat and nonresident trophy hunters (who are already limited to one bear), we feel that a more conservative harvest strategy would benefit both user groups.

**PROPOSED BY:** Homer Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-047)

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**PROPOSAL 86**

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

Reduce the bag limit for spruce grouse in Units 7 and 15 as follows:

Reduce spruce grouse limit to five per day, ten in possession.

Retain current ruffed grouse limit of one per day, two in possession.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Units 7 and 15 are similar to Unit 14C in that they have a growing number of hunters and much of the hunting pressure is concentrated along the road system. Grouse populations are cyclic and susceptible to over harvest, especially when a liberal limit may encourage the taking of entire cohorts.

Changing the spruce grouse limit to conform with 14C would be a prudent move to insure grouse hunting opportunities in the future.

**PROPOSED BY:** Homer Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-046)

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**PROPOSAL 87**

**5 AAC 85.065(a)(3). Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game.**

Close the ptarmigan season in Unit 15C as follows:

A complete cessation of hunting of ptarmigan for at least five years and allow them to come back, please.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Ptarmigan. Where are they? When we moved to our place on East Skyline in 1980, it was common to see ptarmigan over winter when they would come down to feed on willow tips. When the snows got deep on Lookout, they would come to our area to feed. I have not seen a ptarmigan here in over 20 years. Likewise, when my family goes into the Caribou Hills area, they see no ptarmigan, and they used to see so many. When I visited with some of the early homesteaders, they told me when they came up here to hunt in the fall, the sky would turn white with ptarmigan that came to feed on the plentiful blueberries. The berries are still there, but no ptarmigan has fed on them in many years. Instead, the now more numerous black bear harvest them.

**PROPOSED BY:** Mildred Martin (EG-F18-018)

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**PROPOSAL 88**

**5 AAC 92.530(6). Management areas.**

Move the boundary of the Skilak Loop Wildlife Management Area in Unit 15 as follows:

Simply move the boundary to the northern shoreline of the Kenai River. This would increase access for hunting and trapping. We believe the biggest benefit of this would go to waterfowl hunters. Currently there are no conservation concerns on hunting waterfowl.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The current boundary of the Skilak Loop closure should be modified. The current boundary along the south shore of the Kenai River reduces opportunity.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-052)

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**PROPOSAL 89**

**5 AAC 84.270(1). Furbearer trapping.**

Close the trapping season for beaver in an area of Units 7 and 15C as follows:

**5 AAC 84.270(1) Beaver, Units 7 and 15.**

Beaver trapping in the headwaters of the south fork of the Anchor River starting at the fork in T4S R12W section 19. **No open season.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Beaver are currently absent from the headwaters of the south fork of the Anchor River Drainage. Evidence of historic beaver activity is present in this area, including old dams and lodges. Trapping records indicate that

beaver were present in this system as recently as 2006 and well established in the late 1990s. The loss of beaver from this area has decreased the overall wildlife habitat quality and has reduced trapping opportunity due to lack of animals. Beaver are a keystone species that alter their environment, providing habitat for other species such as moose, songbirds, waterfowl, and salmon rearing. Beavers increase water table levels and nutrient deposition that increases forage values. This area is void of potential for human wildlife conflicts due to beaver activity as no roads, agriculture or other man-made activities exist in the proposed area. I propose that the headwaters of the south fork of the Anchor River Drainage be closed to beaver trapping to allow the reestablishment of beaver to this area.

If this area is not closed to trapping, the area will remain void of beaver and habitat benefits will be lost. Alternatively, I have requested that the Department of Fish and Game relocate beavers to this watershed, but this is unlikely to be successful without a trapping closure, as any animals that are relocated have a high probability of being trapped before becoming established.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jim Van Oss (EG-F18-019)  
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**PROPOSAL 90**

**5 AAC 92.530(6). Management Areas.**

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

Remove the date restrictions and expand the hunt area for the small game youth hunt in the Skilak Loop Wildlife Management Area in Unit 15 as follows:

This is a simple adjustment. Remove the date restrictions for the youth small game hunt in the Skilak Loop area. Allow hunting of small game for youth with the same dates in the Remainder of Unit 15. Also remove the current youth hunting border within the Skilak Loop Management Area, allowing youth hunting within the entire Skilak Loop area.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The current Skilak Loop youth hunt is overly restricted. There are too many restrictions in place for no conservation reasons. The current area open to youth hunting on restricted dates is open to archery for small game in the entire Skilak Loop area.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-053)  
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**PROPOSAL 91**

**5 AAC 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions.**

Prohibit the discharge of certain weapons used for hunting and trapping within 1/2 mile of any residence in Unit 15C as follows:

The discharge of firearms, crossbows, or bows and arrows for the purpose of hunting or trapping is prohibited within 1/2 mile of a residence and its outbuildings in Unit 15C South of Anchor Point and North of Kachemak Bay and the Fox River Drainage without the specific, advanced written permission of the landowner.

(This proposal suggests an optimal solution, but should the Board of Game (board) decide this too sweeping a measure, the distance might be amended to 1/4 mile and/or be restricted to a person's residence rather than encompassing its outbuildings.)

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The negligent discharge of firearms and other weaponry near homes.** In recent years, with the population growth on the Kenai Peninsula, particularly in the Homer and Anchor Point areas, people's interactions with wildlife near residences is increasing. Along with this, the negative interaction between hunters and property owners is increasing also, with documented incidents involving hunters shooting wildlife without permission, often in an unsafe manner. There are also incidents whereby hunters with permission from one landowner shoot dangerously close to neighbors' residences. Current laws and regulations, such as those pertaining to the negligent discharge of firearms and the posting of private property, have not satisfactorily addressed this issue.

In order to minimize safety concerns and decrease hunter/landowner conflicts, this proposal asks the board to adopt a regulation that sets a minimum shooting distance from a residence and its outbuildings. Many states have established a basic "safety zone," whereby no person, except the owner or occupant, or someone with specific, advanced written permission thereof, shall discharge a firearm, crossbow or bow and arrow within (XXX) yards of an occupied dwelling, or any barn, stable or other building used in connection therewith, while hunting or trapping wild birds or wild animals of any kind. Should a landowner's property overlap the "safety zone" of a neighbor's property, the overlap will still constitute the neighbor's "safety zone." This makes it incumbent upon the hunter to ensure he or she is not unwittingly discharging a firearm in an unsafe manner, causing nuisance or gaining an unfair advantage over wildlife habituated to human proximity.

Precedence for such a regulation already exists in Alaska: Alaska State Parks has a regulation that prohibits the discharge of firearms within 1/2 mile of developed areas including trailheads. Also, the city of Homer has an ordinance prohibiting the discharge of firearms within city limits. However, the actual city limit boundary of Homer encompasses a very small area and does not include the majority of the populace, nor does it include the large tracts of land inhabited by targeted wildlife.

**PROPOSED BY:** Victoria Wilson Winne (EG-F18-064)

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**PROPOSAL 92**

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

Open a hunting season for tundra swan in Units 7 and 15 as follows:

Allowing a harvest of tundra swans within conservation guidelines may be warranted. Maybe a season from October 1 – December 16. Some opportunity should be allowed if no conservation concerns exist. We look forward to a new hunting opportunity on the Kenai Peninsula. While not our preferred option, a registration permit would be an option.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** There seems to be an abundance of tundra swans in Alaska. There are open seasons for tundra swans in Alaska and other states. If there is not a conservation concern, we would like to see some harvest opportunities.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F18-061)

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