



Homer Soil & Water
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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March 12, 2019

RC0024

Dear Alaska Board of Game

Homer Soil and Water strongly supports approval of Proposal 89 submitted to the Southcentral Regional Board of Game and proposing closure of beaver trapping in the south fork of Anchor River drainage within Units 7 and 15 starting at the fork in T4S R12W section 19. The regional board has approved moving this proposal on to the state board for consideration. Portions of Proposal 89 are copied below.

Beavers were once common in these areas but are now absent. Closing the areas to trapping for at least 5 years would allow beaver populations a chance to re-establish. After 5 years, ADF&G biologists could resurvey the area to determine whether beaver populations have recovered sufficiently for trapping to be re-opened. At that time, appropriate management decisions could be made.

Homer Soil and Water recognizes that beavers can benefit watersheds in many ways, including:

- Recharging groundwater aquifers and raising local water tables;
- Reducing sedimentation downstream of beaver dams;
- Increasing summer low flows and moderating flood flows downstream of dams;
- Increasing habitat diversity;
- Improving habitats for waterfowl, salmon, moose, and numerous other fish and wildlife species;
- Providing water sources during fire fighting;
- Providing areas for human angling and recreation.

Given that the area to be closed for trapping contains no human land use activities that would conflict with the presence of beavers, and that beavers could benefit the area in numerous ways, Homer Soil and Water strongly supports approval of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Chris Rainwater, Chair, Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

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 94 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. Beavers 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.

"To provide education and leadership in the conservation and sustainable use of soil- and water- related resources through cooperative programs that protect, restore and improve our environment."