

McGrath Area Proposals – Units 19, 21A and 21E

PROPOSAL 95

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

Establish a resident winter moose hunt in Unit 19D East as follows:

The McGrath Advisory Committee would like to propose a winter moose hunt in Unit 19D East. Hunt conditions include the following:

1. Season: February 1st – February 28th.
2. Registration permit available in the hunt area in January to the end of the season.
3. Residents only.
4. Any moose except cows with calves.
5. Quota will be set by the Department of Fish and Game.
6. No aircraft except between publicly owned airports including McGrath, Takotna, Medfra, Nikolai and Telida.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Moose densities in the McGrath area have approximately doubled since surveys began in 2001. Recently twinning rates have begun to decline, and it is time to slow the growth of the herd. There is additional harvest opportunity available and we would like to propose a winter moose hunt. This will help spread hunter effort out throughout the year, maintain strong bull:cow ratios, and allow the harvest of cow moose. Increased fall bull harvest is not warranted because bull:cow ratios are declining along the river. Additionally, a winter hunt will allow for more access and help us achieve our harvest objectives.

PROPOSED BY: McGrath Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-023)

PROPOSAL 96

5 AAC 92.123(a)(2). Intensive Management Plans VII.

Reauthorize the Unit 19D-East predation control program as follows:

(a) **Plans established.** Intensive management plans for the following areas are established in this section:

...

(2) Unit 19(D)-East Predation Control Area:

...

(c) **Unit 19(D)-East Predation Control Area:** the Unit 19(D)-East Predation Control Area is established and consists of those portions of the Kuskokwim River drainage within Unit 19(D) upstream from the Selatna River drainage, **and** [BUT EXCLUDING] the Black River drainage, encompassing approximately **8,569** [8,513] square miles; this predation control program does not apply to any National Park Service or National Wildlife Refuge lands unless approved by the

federal agencies; notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, and based on the following information contained in this section, the commissioner or the commissioner's designee may conduct a wolf and a black bear and a brown bear population reduction or a wolf and black bear and brown bear population regulation program in Unit 19(D)-East to benefit moose:

(1) the following Wolf and Bear Control Focus Areas are established in the Unit 19(D)-East Predation Control Area; the areas do not delineate a moose, wolf, or bear population and are not intended to distinguish animals within the focus areas from populations in Unit 19(D)-East; the purpose is to focus wolf and bear control in a relatively small area where moose numbers can be better estimated, where moose are accessible to hunters, and where harvest can be closely monitored;

(A) the Wolf Control Focus Area (WCFA) encompasses approximately **5,579 square miles within that portion of Unit 19(D) upstream of the Selatna River drainage, but excluding the Black River drainage, and downstream of but not including, Fourth of July Creek, the Swift Fork, or the Slow Fork and Tonzona River drainages east of 153° 10'**; **wolf control will be conducted only within the WCFA; the department will have the discretion to adjust its size and shape to include up to approximately 6,000 square miles of Unit 19(D)-East;** [4,500 SQUARE MILES WITHIN THAT PORTION OF UNIT 19(D) UPSTREAM OF, BUT NOT INCLUDING, THE BLACK RIVER DRAINING AND UPSTREAM OF AND INCLUDING THE LITTLE SELATNA RIVER DRAINAGE AND DOWNSTREAM OF, BUT NOT INCLUDING, FOURTH OF JULY CREEK, SODA CREEK, SLOW FORK, AND TONZONA RIVER DRAINAGES,] SURROUNDING THE VILLAGES OF MCGRATH, TAKOTNA, MEDFRA AND NIKOLAI; WOLF CONTROL WILL BE CONDUCTED ONLY WITHIN THE WCFA; THE DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE THE DISCRETION TO ADJUST THE WCFA'S SIZE AND SHAPE TO INCLUDE UP TO APPROXIMATELY 5,100 SQUARE MILES OF UNIT 19(D)-EAST;]

(B) the Black Bear and Brown Bear Control Focus Area (BCFA) encompasses approximately 528 square miles consisting of those portions of the Kuskokwim River drainage enclosed by a line starting northwest of McGrath at 63° 04.00' N. lat., 155° 50.00' W. long., then east to 63° 04.00' N. lat., 154° 50.00' W. long., then south to 62° 54.00' N. lat., 154° 50.00' W. long., then west to 62° 54.00' N. lat., 155° 25.00' W. long., then south to 62° 50.00' N. lat., 155° 25.00' W. long., then west to 62° 50.00' N. lat., 155° 30.00' W. long., then south to 62° 48.00' N. lat., 155° 30.00' W. long., then west to 62° 48.00' N. lat., 155° 35.00' W. long., then south to 62° 42.00' N. lat., 155° 35.00' W. long., then west to 62° 42.00' N. lat., 155° 55.00' W. long., then north to 62° 50.00' N. lat., 155° 55.00' W. long., then east to 62° 50.00' N. lat., 155° 50.00' W. long., then north to the point of beginning at 63° 04.00' N. lat., 155° 50.00' W. long., surrounding the village of McGrath; bear control will be conducted only within the BCFA; the department will have the discretion to adjust its size and shape up to approximately 680 square miles of Unit 19(D)-East; the BCFA is within the WCFA;

(2) this is a continuing control program that was first authorized by the board in 1995; wolf control began in winter 2003–2004 and bear control began with nonlethal removal of bears in the BCFA during May 2003 and May 2004; the control program is currently designed to increase moose numbers and harvest in the WCFA and BCFA by reducing predation on moose and is expected to make a contribution to achieving the intensive management (IM) objectives in Unit 19(D)-East;

(3) moose, wolf, black bear, and brown bear objectives are as follows:

(A) moose IM objectives established by the board for Unit 19(D)-East are for a population of 6,000–8,000 moose and an annual harvest of 400–600 moose;

(B) the density objective for moose in the WCFA is 1.0 moose per square mile (corrected for sightability) in fall surveys; the annual harvest objective for the WCFA is 225 moose; [BCFA IS 2.0 PER SQUARE MILE (CORRECTED FOR SIGHTABILITY) IN FALL SURVEYS; THE ANNUAL HARVEST OBJECTIVE FOR THE WCFA IS 180 MOOSE;]

(C) the wolf control objective in the WCFA is to reduce wolf numbers by at least 60–80 percent; the pre-control wolf population in Unit 19(D)-East was estimated in February 2001 at 198 wolves; the 2001 pre-control estimate within the WCFA is 130 wolves; only removing wolves from the WCFA will ensure that wolves persist in Unit 19(D)-East; [THE POST-CONTROL WOLF POPULATION OBJECTIVE FOR UNIT 19(D)-EAST IS 40 WOLVES REMAINING; THE PRE-CONTROL WOLF POPULATION IN UNIT 19(D)-EAST WAS ESTIMATED IN FEBRUARY 2001 AT 198 WOLVES; A MINIMUM POPULATION OF 40 WOLVES IS APPROXIMATELY AN 80 PERCENT REDUCTION FROM THE PRE-CONTROL WOLF POPULATION AND WILL ENSURE THAT WOLVES PERSIST IN THE PLAN AREA;]

(D) the black bear control objective in the BCFA is to reduce black bear numbers to the lowest level possible; the pre-control black bear population in Unit 19(D)-East was estimated at 1,700; the pre-control black bear population estimate within the BCFA was approximately 130; because the BCFA is a relatively small geographic area, removing black bears from within the BCFA will have only a minor effect on the black bear population in Unit 19(D)-East; [THE WOLF CONTROL POPULATION OBJECTIVE IN THE WCFA IS TO REDUCE WOLF NUMBERS TO THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE; THE PRE-CONTROL WOLF POPULATION ESTIMATE WITHIN THE WCFA IN 2001 WAS 68 WOLVES;]

(E) the brown bear control objective in the BCFA is to reduce brown bear numbers to the lowest level possible; the pre-control brown bear population in Unit 19(D)-East was 128; the pre-control brown bear population estimate within the BCFA was 9; because the BCFA is a relatively small geographic area, removing brown bears from within the BCFA will have only a minor effect on the brown bear population in Unit 19(D)-East; [THE BLACK BEAR CONTROL

POPULATION OBJECTIVE IN THE BCFA IS TO REDUCE BLACK BEAR NUMBERS TO THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE; THE PRE-CONTROL BLACK BEAR POPULATION IN UNIT 19(D)-EAST WAS ESTIMATED AT 1,700 BLACK BEARS; THE PRE-CONTROL BLACK BEAR POPULATION ESTIMATE WITHIN THE BCFA WAS APPROXIMATELY 130 BLACK BEARS; BECAUSE THE BCFA IS A RELATIVELY SMALL GEOGRAPHIC AREA, REMOVING BLACK BEARS FROM WITHIN THE BCFA WILL HAVE ONLY A MINOR EFFECT ON THE BLACK BEAR POPULATION IN UNIT 19(D)-EAST;]

[(F) THE BROWN BEAR POPULATION CONTROL OBJECTIVE IN THE BCFA IS TO REDUCE BROWN BEAR NUMBERS TO THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE; THE PRE-CONTROL BROWN BEAR POPULATION ESTIMATE WITHIN THE BCFA WAS NINE BROWN BEARS; BECAUSE THE BCFA IS A RELATIVELY SMALL GEOGRAPHIC AREA, REMOVING BROWN BEARS FROM WITHIN THE BCFA WILL HAVE ONLY A MINOR EFFECT ON THE BROWN BEAR POPULATION IN UNIT 19(D)-EAST;]

(4) board findings concerning populations and human use are as follows:

(A) **the Unit 19(D)-East moose harvest objective has not been achieved;** [THE UNIT 19(D)-EAST MOOSE POPULATION AND HARVEST OBJECTIVES HAVE NOT BEEN ACHIEVED;]

(B) **the WCFA objective for moose harvest has not been achieved;** THE BCFA OBJECTIVES FOR MOOSE DENSITY AND MOOSE HARVEST HAVE NOT BEEN ACHIEVED;]

(C) predation by wolves and bears is an important cause of the failure to achieve [POPULATION AND] harvest objectives;

(D) a reduction of wolf and bear predation within the WCFA and BCFA can reasonably be expected to make progress towards achieving the Unit 19(D)-East intensive management harvest objectives;

(E) reducing predation is likely to be effective and feasible using recognized and prudent active management techniques and **is** based on scientific information;

(F) reducing predation is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns;

(5) authorized methods and means are as follows:

(A) hunting and trapping of wolves and hunting of black bears and brown bears by the public in Unit 19(D)-East during the term of this program may occur as provided in the hunting and trapping regulations set out elsewhere in this title, including use of motorized vehicles;

(B) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may allow department employees to conduct aerial, land and shoot, or ground-based lethal removal of wolves and black bears and brown bears using state-owned, privately-owned, or chartered equipment, including helicopters, under AS 16.05.783;

(C) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may issue public aerial shooting permits or public land and shoot permits using fixed-wing aircraft as a method of wolf removal under AS 16.05.783;

(6) time frame is as follows:

(A) through **June 30, 2026**, [JUNE 30, 2020,] the commissioner may authorize removal of wolves and black bears and brown bears in Unit 19(D)-East;

(B) annually, the department shall, to the extent practicable, provide to the board a report of program activities conducted during the preceding 12 months, including implementation activities, the status of the moose, wolf, and bear populations, and recommendations for changes, if necessary, to achieve the objectives of the plan;

(7) the commissioner will review, modify or suspend program activities **as follows**: [WHEN:]

(A) **when the moose density and harvest objectives specified in this subsection are achieved within the WCFA.** [THE WOLF SURVEYS OR ACCUMULATED INFORMATION FROM DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL, HUNTERS, TRAPPERS, AND PERMITTEES INDICATE THE NEED TO AVOID REDUCING WOLF NUMBERS IN UNIT 19(D)-EAST BELOW THE CONTROL OBJECTIVE OF 40 WOLVES SPECIFIED IN THIS SUBSECTION;]

(B) **when any measure consistent with signs of nutritional stress in the moose population are identified.** [THE MOOSE DENSITY AND HARVEST OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE BCFA SPECIFIED IN THIS SUBSECTION ARE ACHIEVED.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Unit 19D-East Intensive Management Plan will expire on June 30, 2020. The program was first authorized by the Board of Game (board) in 1995 and wolf control began in 2003. Bear control began with nonlethal removal of bears by the Department of Fish and Game (department) during May 2003 and 2004 and continued with lethal removal by the public starting in 2010. Population objectives for moose in the WCFA have been met, but not harvest objectives. The department recommends reauthorization of the plan to continue progress towards achieving the harvest objectives established for this area.

This proposal will reauthorize the program for six years, from 1 July 2020 through 30 June 2026. It includes options for aerial wolf control conducted by public permittees and the department, and aerial black and brown bear control conducted by the department only. Additional details will also be made available for public review in a separate intensive management operational plan prior to the board meeting.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F19-151)

Interior and Eastern Arctic Region Proposals

PROPOSAL 97

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

Change the Tier II permit hunt for moose in Unit 19A to a registration permit hunt as follows:

Based on the allowable harvest we recommend moving from a Tier II hunt to a registration permit hunt. Permits only available in Unit 18 and 19 before the hunt.

5AAC 85.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose:

Unit 19(A), that portion downstream from and including the George River drainage, and downstream from and excluding the Downey River drainage.

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

One antlered bull by **registration permit** Sept. 1 - Sept. 20
[TIER II] permit only; [UP TO 300 PERMITS MAY BE ISSUED].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We would like the Board of Game to replace the TM680 Tier II, Unit 19A moose hunt with a registration hunt.

PROPOSED BY: Bethel Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-033)

PROPOSAL 98

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose

Change the Tier II permit hunt for moose in Unit 19A to a registration permit hunt as follows:

I recommend moving from a Tier II hunt to a registration permit hunt. Permits only available in Units 18 and 19 before the hunt. The allowable harvest is and has been above the upper range of the ANS (amount reasonably necessary for subsistence) for a few years and it time to move into a registration hunt.

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

5AAC 85.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose:

Unit 19A, that portion downstream from and including the George River drainage, and downstream from and excluding the Downey River drainage

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

One antlered bull by **registration permit** Sept. 1 - Sept. 20
[TIER II] permit only; [UP TO 300 PERMITS MAY BE ISSUED.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the Board of Game to replace the TM680 Tier II, Unit 19A hunt with a registration permit hunt. Unit 19A moose have long been a regional resource and the Tier II limits hunters based on household and age. I would like to see younger people participating in the hunt.

PROPOSED BY: Sam Hancock (EG-F19-045)

PROPOSAL 99

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

Change the Tier II moose permit hunt (TM680) in Unit 19A to a household permit as follows:

People in the same household can hunt together. There is currently another area in the state where this occurs. Please use that language.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The TM680 permit be modified from an individual permit to that of a “household permit”. We would like to modify the permit in order to reflect our traditional way of hunting as a group. It is important for elders to pass on knowledge to the younger generation and currently within the Tier II permit system that our area has, mentoring and hunting together is not allowed. We are not requesting an increase in number only that when hunting the permit issued contains each member of the household’s name on it. The licensed hunter needs to have the permit with them at the time of the hunt.

PROPOSED BY: Central Kuskokwim Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-102)

PROPOSAL 100

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

Extend the resident season dates for moose hunting in Unit 19A Remainder as follows:

For Unit 19A Remainder moose hunt area:
Registration permit season dates: September 1 - 30.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Extend the moose hunting season on the Unit 19A Eastern hunt area in and around the Holitna River from September 1 - 5 to September 1 - 30.

It is a limited registration hunt with only 30 permits given out so having a short season is not necessary. There are a lot of other restrictions on this permit making it hard to use and this might be the only chance at getting a moose if people are not allowed to have any other Kuskokwim moose permits for the year.

- 1) One per household; 2) no proxy hunting; 3) only moose permit for Kuskokwim; 4) Holitna control use are with 40hp restrictions, 5) very short season, and 6) permit is first come, first serve in the hunt area in July only.

Collectively these six restrictions make it difficult and stressful for hunters to put meat in the freezer. Especially if the Department of Fish and Game is only issuing a limited number of registration permits every year within the hunt area. I think some of these restrictions can be reduced and the actual hunting season can be extended because the department is in no danger of overharvesting. Another bonus to this is that hunters would not have to hunt early September when it can be very hot and buggy.

Other considerations would be to allow people to get other Kuskokwim permits after they turn in this permit (if unsuccessful) and to allow proxy hunting. Being able to put a moose in the freezer is really important for a lot of families along the Kuskokwim River and life happens so being able to have a proxy or hunt a different moose permit later if unsuccessful would really help people.

PROPOSED BY: Sam Hancock (EG-F19-057)

PROPOSAL 101

5 AAC 92.540. Controlled use areas.

Remove the horsepower restriction in the Holitna-Hoholitna Controlled Use Area in Unit 19A as follows:

The Unit 19A registration hunt gives the Department of Fish and Game many tools to limit the number of hunters and/or keep harvest at sustainable levels without the 40-horsepower restriction on big game hunters. Because the 40-horsepower economically discriminates against hunters and serves no other purpose, I recommend it be removed. If the department has concerns about the number of hunters on the Holitna and Hoholitna Rivers they can limit the number of registration permits issued.

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

5AAC 92.540(7)(B)

[(B) the Holitna-Hoholitna Controlled Use Area

- (i) the area consists of water of the Holitna River downstream from Kashegelok, the Titnuk River downstream from Fuller Mountain and the Hoholitna River downstream from the confluence of the South Fork and main Hoholitna River.
- (ii) the area is closed to the use of any boat equipped with an inboard or outboard motor with an aggregate horsepower in excess of the manufacturer's rating of 40 horsepower for hunting big game, including the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game, from August 1 through November 1; however this provision does not prohibit the transportation into the area of game meat that has been processed for human consumption;]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to remove the 40-horsepower restriction on big game hunters in Unit 19A.

PROPOSED BY: Sam Hancock (EG-F19-044)

PROPOSAL 102

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

Shift the season dates for the Tier II moose permit hunt in Unit 19A as follows:

I suggest that the season dates be changed to help address the warm and wet weather that occurs the first part of September.

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

Unit 19(A), that portion downstream from and including the George River drainage, and downstream from and excluding the Downey River drainage

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

One antlered bull by Tier II permit only; up to 300 permits may be issued.

Sept. 5-Sept. 25 [SEPT. 1 – SEPT. 20]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Tier II moose season in Unit 19A is currently from September 1-20. In recent years, warmer weather, increased gas prices, and expensive camping supplies have made it difficult to successfully hunt within that time frame. Warm wet weather in the early part of September may cause moose meat to start spoiling before hunters are able to get it safely home to finish processing and preserving the meat.

PROPOSED BY: Gregory Thomas Hoffman Sr. (EG-F19-035)

PROPOSAL 103

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

Establish a Tier II permit hunt for moose in Unit 19A Remainder as follows:

For the Unit 19A Remainder moose hunt area, have a Tier II hunt if the harvestable portion drops below the lower range of the ANS.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unit 19A Remainder (Eastern hunt area in and around the Holitna River). If the harvestable portion drops below the lower range of the ANS (amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence) the hunt should transition into a Tier II hunt.

Moose meat is an incredible valuable commodity for people on the Kuskokwim River. Most people along the river self-identify as a substance user. When bull moose are available for harvest, we should harvest them not leave them on the landscape to die of old age. By not allowing a Tier II hunt in this area the state is wasting meat people could really use. We cannot save bulls for later, that’s just not how that would work. Use them or lose them. I understand that some people in the area don’t like Tier II hunts but if we are in a situation where we drop below the lower range of

the ANS again we should have a Tier II hunt. It's the only way to make the best of a bad situation. If people only harvest bull moose it will not negatively affect the population. I don't like that a regulation was passed that would remove this subsistence option in the future just for this hunt area where subsistence is a way of life for most people.

PROPOSED BY: Sam Hancock

(EG-F19-056)

PROPOSAL 104

5 AAC 92.123(a)(1). Intensive Management Plans VII.

Reauthorize the Unit 19A predation control program as follows:

(a) **Plans established.** Intensive management plans for the following areas are established in this section:

(1) Unit 19(A) Predation Control Area;

...

(b) Unit 19(A) Predation Control Area: the Unit 19(A) Predation Control Area is established and consists of those portions of the Kuskokwim River drainage within Unit 19(A), encompassing approximately 9,972 [10,048] square miles; this predation control program does not apply within National Park Service or National Wildlife Refuge lands unless approved by the federal agencies; notwithstanding any other provision in this title, and based on the following information contained in this section, the commissioner or the commissioner's designee may conduct a wolf and black bear and brown bear population reduction or a wolf and black bear and brown bear population regulation program in Unit 19(A) to benefit moose:

(1) the following Wolf and Bear Predation Control Focus Areas are established in the Unit 19(A) Predation Control Area; the areas do not delineate a moose, wolf, or bear population and are not intended to distinguish animals within the areas from populations in Unit 19(A); the purpose is to focus wolf and bear control in a relatively small area where moose numbers can be better estimated, where moose are accessible to hunters, and where harvest can be closely monitored;

(A) the Wolf Predation Control Focus Area (WCFA) encompasses approximately 3,905 square miles within all Unit 19(A) drainages of the Kuskokwim River upstream from and including the Holitna River Drainage; wolf control will be conducted only within the WCFA; the department has the discretion to adjust the area's size and shape to include up to approximately 4,400 [4,000] square miles of Unit 19(A);

(B) the Black Bear and Brown Bear Predation Control Focus Area (BCFA) encompasses approximately 534 square miles consisting of those portions of the Kuskokwim River drainage within the area enclosed by a line starting at Sleetmute at 61° 42.00' N. lat., 157° 10.00' W. long., then east to 61° 42.00' N. lat., 157° 00.00' W. long., then north to 61° 44.00' N. lat., 157° 00.00' W. long., then east to 61° 44.00' N. lat., 156° 55.00' W. long., then north to 61° 46.00' N. lat., 156° 55.00' W. long., then

east to 61° 46.00' N. lat., 156° 50.00' W. long., then north to 61° 48.00' N. lat., 156° 50.00' W. long., then east to 61° 48.00' N. lat., 156° 45.00' W. long., then north to 61° 50.00' N. lat., 156° 45.00' W. long., then east to 61° 50.00' N. lat., 156° 30.00' W. long., then south to 61° 40.00' N. lat., 156° 30.00' W. long., then west to 61° 40.00' N. lat., 156° 45.00' W. long., then south to 61° 18.00' N. lat., 156° 45.00' W. long., then west to 61° 18.00' N. lat., 157° 15.00' W. long., then north to 61° 24.00' N. lat., 157° 15.00' W. long., then east to 61° 24.00' N. lat., 157° 10.00' W. long., then north to 61° 42.00' N. lat., 157° 10.00' W. long; bear control will be conducted only within the BCFA; the department has the discretion to adjust the area's size and shape to include up to approximately 800 square miles of Unit 19(A);

(2) this is a continuing control program that was first authorized by the board in 2004 for wolf control, with bear control added by the board in 2012; it is currently designed to increase moose numbers and harvest in the WCFA and BCFA by reducing predation on moose and is expected to make a contribution toward achieving the intensive management (IM) objectives in Unit 19(A);

(3) moose, wolf, black bear, and brown bear objectives are as follows:

(A) the IM population objective established by the board for Units 19(A) and 19(B) is 13,500–16,500 moose; based on the relative sizes of the two units, the proportional population objective for Unit 19(A) alone is 7,600–9,300 moose; the IM moose harvest objective for Units 19(A) and 19(B) is 750–950 moose annually; the proportional harvest objective for Unit 19(A) alone is 400–550 moose annually;

(B) the density objective for moose in the **WCFA is 1.0 moose**[BCFA is 2.0] per square mile (corrected for sightability) during late winter surveys; the annual moose harvest objective for the WCFA is **155** [120] moose;

(C) **the wolf control population objective in the WCFA is to reduce wolf numbers by at least 60–80 percent; the pre-control estimate within the WCFA is 75 wolves; the pre-control wolf population in Unit 19(A) is estimated at 150; only removing wolves from the WCFA will ensure that wolves persist in Unit 19(A);** [THE POST-CONTROL WOLF POPULATION OBJECTIVE FOR UNIT 19(A) IS 25–30 WOLVES; THE PRE-CONTROL WOLF POPULATION IN UNIT 19(A) WAS ESTIMATED IN WINTER 2006–2007 AT 125–150 WOLVES; A MINIMUM WOLF POPULATION OF 25 WOLVES IS APPROXIMATELY AN 80 PERCENT REDUCTION FROM THE PRE-CONTROL WOLF POPULATION AND WILL ENSURE THAT WOLVES PERSIST IN THE PLAN AREA;]

(D) **the black bear control objective in the BCFA is to reduce black bear numbers to the lowest level possible; the pre-control black bear population in Unit 19(A) is estimated at 2,500–3,000; the pre-control estimate within the BCFA is 92-102; because the BCFA is a relatively small geographic area, removing black bears from within the BCFA will have only a minor effect on the black bear population in Unit 19(A);** [THE WOLF CONTROL POPULATION OBJECTIVE IN THE WCFA IS TO

REDUCE WOLF NUMBERS TO THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE; THE PRE-CONTROL WOLF POPULATION ESTIMATE WITHIN THE WCFA IN WINTER 2006–2007 WAS 75–100 WOLVES;]

(E) the brown bear control objective in the BCFA is to reduce brown bear numbers to the lowest level possible; the pre-control brown bear population in Unit 19(A) is estimated at 180–210; the pre-control estimate within the BCFA is 10–15; because the BCFA is a relatively small geographic area, removing brown bears from within the BCFA will have only a minor effect on the brown bear population in Unit 19(A); [THE BLACK BEAR CONTROL POPULATION OBJECTIVE IN THE BCFA IS TO REDUCE BLACK BEAR NUMBERS TO THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE; THE PRE-CONTROL BLACK BEAR POPULATION IN UNIT 19(A) WAS ESTIMATED AT 2,500–3,000 BLACK BEARS; THE PRE-CONTROL BLACK BEAR POPULATION ESTIMATE WITHIN THE BCFA WAS 135–160 BLACK BEARS; BECAUSE THE BCFA IS A RELATIVELY SMALL GEOGRAPHIC AREA, REMOVING BLACK BEARS FROM WITHIN THE BCFA WILL HAVE ONLY A MINOR EFFECT ON THE BLACK BEAR POPULATION IN UNIT 19(A);]

[(F) THE BROWN BEAR POPULATION CONTROL OBJECTIVE IN THE BCFA IS TO REDUCE BROWN BEAR NUMBERS TO THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE; THE PRE-CONTROL BROWN BEAR POPULATION IN UNIT 19(A) WAS ESTIMATED AT 180–200 BROWN BEARS; THE PRE-CONTROL BROWN BEAR POPULATION ESTIMATE WITHIN THE BCFA WAS 10–15 BROWN BEARS; BECAUSE THE BCFA IS A RELATIVELY SMALL GEOGRAPHIC AREA, REMOVING BROWN BEARS FROM WITHIN THE BCFA WILL HAVE ONLY A MINOR EFFECT ON THE BROWN BEAR POPULATION IN UNIT 19(A);]

(4) board findings concerning populations and human use are as follows:

(A) the Unit 19(A) **IM** moose population and harvest objectives have not been achieved;

(B) the WCFA objectives for moose density and moose harvest have not been achieved; [THE BCFA OBJECTIVES FOR MOOSE DENSITY AND MOOSE HARVEST HAVE NOT BEEN ACHIEVED;]

(C) predation by wolves and bears is an important cause of the failure to achieve **moose** population and harvest objectives;

(D) a reduction of wolf and bear predation within the WCFA and BCFA can reasonably be expected to make progress towards achieving the Unit 19(A) IM objectives;

(E) reducing predation is likely to be effective and feasible using recognized and prudent active management techniques and **are** based on scientific information;

(F) reducing predation is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns;

(5) authorized methods and means are as follows:

(A) hunting and trapping of wolves and hunting of black bears and brown bears by the public in Unit 19(A) during the term of this program may occur as provided in the hunting and trapping regulations set out elsewhere in this title, including use of motorized vehicles;

(B) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may allow department employees to conduct aerial, land and shoot, or ground-based lethal removal of wolves and black bears and brown bears using state-owned, privately-owned, or chartered equipment, including helicopters, under AS 16.05.783;

(C) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may issue public aerial shooting permits or public land and shoot permits using fixed-wing aircraft as a method of wolf removal under AS 16.05.783;

(6) time frame is as follows:

(A) through **June 30, 2026**, [JUNE 30, 2020,] the commissioner may authorize removal of wolves and black bears and brown bears in Unit 19(A);

(B) annually, the department shall, to the extent practicable, provide to the board a report of program activities conducted during the preceding 12 months, including implementation activities, the status of the moose, wolf and bear populations, and recommendations for changes, if necessary, to achieve the objectives of the plan;

(7) the commissioner will review, modify or suspend program activities **as follows:** [WHEN:]

(A) **when the moose density and harvest objectives specified in this subsection are achieved within the WCFA.** [WOLF SURVEYS OR ACCUMULATED INFORMATION FROM DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL, HUNTERS, TRAPPERS, AND PERMITTEES INDICATE THE NEED TO AVOID REDUCING WOLF NUMBERS IN UNIT 19(A) BELOW THE CONTROL OBJECTIVE OF 25–30 WOLVES SPECIFIED IN THIS SUBSECTION;]

(B) **when any measure consistent with signs of nutritional stress in the moose population are identified.** [THE MOOSE DENSITY AND HARVEST OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE BCFA SPECIFIED IN THIS SUBSECTION ARE ACHIEVED.]

...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Unit 19A Intensive Management Plan expires on June 30, 2020. Public wolf control began in 2004 and the Department of Fish and Game implemented bear control in 2013 and 2014. Moose densities have been slow to respond to these treatments; however, some improvements are now being documented in the moose

population. Reauthorization of this plan will give the department the tools necessary to continue to work towards meeting the population and harvest objectives established by the plan.

This proposal will reauthorize the program for a six-year period from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2026. It includes options for aerial wolf control conducted by public permittees and the department, and aerial black and brown bear control conducted by the department only. Additional details will also be made available for public review in a separate IM operational plan prior to the board meeting.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-150)

PROPOSAL 105

5 AAC 92.123. Intensive Management Plans VII. Authorize predator control for wolf and bear in Unit 19A as follows:

Enact predator control for both wolf and bear within Unit 19A. Please substitute appropriate language or words.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We would like predator control, bear and wolf, authorized for all of Unit 19A. We are still rebuilding our moose population and local area residents have expressed a desire to participate in this program in order to stabilize the predator population.

PROPOSED BY: Central Kuskokwim Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-103)

PROPOSAL 106

5 AAC 92.123. Intensive Management Plans VII.

Expand the predation control area for bear in Unit 19A as follows:

- Expand the bear predator control area that exists in Unit 19A to an area within the Lime Village Management Area, (LVMA), along the Stony River, between the mouth of Can Creek and the mouth of Stink Creek.
- The current bear predator control program in Unit 19A authorizes its application to 800 square miles. So far, and at this time it is being applied to 540 square miles. The program allows for bear predator control on another 260 square miles.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There are too many bears in the LVMA, including the village itself. The effects include:

- There have been multiple incidents of both black and brown bears within Lime Village. These incidents have been increasing in number during recent years.

- Destruction of nets and smokehouses, loss of fish, and danger to humans have become common in the village.
- Local residents have had limited success harvesting these bears, due to bears becoming savvy to the sounds of people walking and ATVs.

PROPOSED BY: Stony Holitna Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-016)

PROPOSAL 107

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose

Establish a resident winter moose hunt in Unit 21E as follows:

The GASH Advisory Committee would like to propose a winter moose hunt in Unit 21E. Hunt conditions include the following:

1. Season: February 15th – March 15th
2. Registration permits available in the hunt area and online.
3. Residents only.
4. Any moose except cows with calves.
5. Quota will be set by the Department of Fish and Game.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Moose densities in the Grayling Anvik Shageluk Holy Cross (GASH) area have increased since surveys began in 2000 and are currently high. Recently twinning rates have begun to decline, browse utilization is high and it is time to slow the growth of the herd. There is additional harvest opportunity available and we would like to propose a winter moose hunt. This will help spread hunter effort out throughout the year, maintain strong bull:cow ratios, and allow the harvest of cow moose. We traditionally had a winter hunt and with the increase of moose it is time to put it back on the books. Additionally, a winter hunt will allow for more access and help us achieve our harvest objectives.

PROPOSED BY: GASH (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross) Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-017)

PROPOSAL 108

5 AAC 92.052. Discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures.

Require trophy destruction of moose antlers taken from Unit 21E under RM836 permits, and establish check stations as follows:

"Pursuant to the discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures outlined in 5 AAC 92.052(5), we propose to require the destruction of the trophy value of antlers from moose taken in Game Management Unit 21E subsistence registration RM836 moose hunts."

Trophy destruction can be required under 5 AAC 92.052 Discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures: "(5) a permittee who takes an animal under a permit shall deliver specified

biological specimens (teeth and antlers) to a check station or to the nearest department office within a time set by the department; the trophy value of an animal taken under a subsistence permit may be nullified by the department or in the field by the hunter cutting one side antler in half upon take;" (5 AAC 92.052(5)).

There will be four check stations established in Unit 21E in the GASH area villages, and ensure all edible meat is left on the bone as required and trophy value of antlers destroyed. These check stations can be manned by volunteers from each of the four communities of GASH (Grayling Anvik Shageluk Holy Cross) and may be vendors of the community at the city offices who serve the State of Alaska selling licenses and tags. If the GASH Advisory Committee agrees, we request ADF&G establish these four check stations to obtain necessary biological or compliance information.

All edible meat of the front quarters, hindquarters, and ribs from moose harvested in Unit 21E prior to October 1 must remain on the bone until the meat is removed from the field and presented in one of the GASH area check stations or is processed for human consumption.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Local moose hunters accessing the Paradise Controlled Use Area portion of Unit 21E compete with nonresident hunters using boats that are causing a hardship to subsistence hunters using the RM836 permit. With an estimated stable number of moose in the Paradise CUA and low bull:cow ratios in the northern portion of Unit 21E, hunters will likely shift their demand toward the local Innoko River basin area. Local hunters are not meeting ANS (amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence) and the current moose hunt is unsustainable. We would like the Board of Game to establish check stations in all the GASH area villages and establish discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures to devalue trophy value of antlers.

PROPOSED BY: Eugene Paul (EG-F19-120)

PROPOSAL 109

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

Replace the moose general season hunts for residents and nonresidents in Unit 21A with registration permit hunts as follows:

The McGrath and GASH (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross) Advisory Committees would like to propose a registration permit to replace the harvest ticket which will improve harvest reporting. The permit will be widely available on the internet and at Department of Fish and Game offices. The seasons and bag limits would otherwise remain the same and this registration permit would simply replace the harvest ticket required for both residents and nonresidents.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The harvest of moose in Unit 21A has increased substantially in recent years. In addition, harvest reporting appears to be poor based on information from hunters and the Alaska Wildlife Troopers. This means that actual harvest numbers are likely even higher than what is being reported. Accurate harvest reporting is essential for proper management of the moose population in Unit 21A.

PROPOSED BY: McGrath Fish and Game Advisory Committee and
GASH (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross) Fish and Game Advisory
Committee

(EG-F19-018)

PROPOSAL 110

5 AAC 92.011. Taking of game by proxy.

Allow proxy hunting for moose in Unit 19D as follows:

Amend 5AAC 92.011 to allow proxy hunting for any antlered bull moose in Unit 19D.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? An interpretation has been made that proxy hunting is not allowed for moose in areas with an any antlered bull bag limit. Unit 19D currently has an any antlered bull bag limit so with this new interpretation proxy hunting would not be allowed in our area. However, proxy hunting is an important traditional practice in the McGrath area.

The McGrath AC was not able to meet on this issue before the proposal deadline to submit a proposal. Therefore, if they are not supportive of this proposal when they meet next fall, I will request it be withdrawn.

PROPOSED BY: Roger Seavoy, McGrath Fish & Game Advisory Committee

(EG-F19-052)

PROPOSAL 111

5 AAC 92.011. Taking of game by proxy.

Allow proxy hunting for moose in Unit 21A and 21E as follows:

The GASH Advisory Committee would like to propose amending 92.011 to add Unit 21A and 21E to the list of areas in which proxy hunting is permitted for moose.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? An interpretation has been made that proxy hunting is not allowed for moose in areas with an any antlered bull bag limit. Proxy hunting is an important traditional practice and we would like to ensure that we are able to continue to proxy hunt for moose in Unit 21A and 21E.

PROPOSED BY: GASH (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross) Fish & Game Advisory
Committee

(EG-F19-021)

PROPOSAL 112

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

Open a registration permit hunt for moose in a portion of Unit 19C and eliminate the general season hunt as follows:

The McGrath Advisory Committee would like to propose a registration permit to replace the harvest ticket hunt which will improve harvest reporting. The permit will be available on the internet and at Department of Fish and Game offices. The new registration permit would be required in that portion of Unit 19C between the east bank of the Windy Fork and the west bank of South Fork, from the mountains north to the Unit 19C/19D boundary. The seasons and bag limits would otherwise remain the same. The remainder of Unit 19C would also remain open using a harvest ticket as is currently in place.

Note: The McGrath Advisory Committee submitted a map with this proposal, which is available on the Board of Game proposal book webpage at: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook or by contacting the ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4046.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Harvest reporting for moose in the Farewell area appears to be poor based on information from hunters and Alaska Wildlife Troopers. As harvest is high in this small area it is essential to have good harvest reporting for proper management of the moose population.

PROPOSED BY: McGrath Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-022)

PROPOSAL 113

5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements.

Require hunter orientation for nonresident moose hunters in Unit 21A and 21E as follows:

The GASH and McGrath Advisory Committees would like to propose a required nonresident orientation for moose hunters in Units 21A and 21E. This would be exactly the same as what is required in Unit 19B. Nonresident hunters who are not guided, or with a resident family member within the second degree of kindred, would be required to watch “Is This Moose Legal” and “Field Care of Big Game”. These videos are available on the Department of Fish and Game webpage and hunters can print out their certificates on the internet making it very easy.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Local residents have concern over meat care from moose harvested by nonresidents who are not guided. A moose is a big animal and most nonresident hunters have no idea what they are getting into when they shoot a moose. It is likely by far the biggest animal they have ever shot. There are excellent educational tools available from the department that would help these hunters to take better care of their meat.

PROPOSED BY: McGrath Fish and Game Advisory Committee and
GASH (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, Holy Cross) Fish and Game Advisory
Committee

PROPOSAL 114

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Establish a winter registration hunt for antlerless caribou in Units 19D and 21A and remove the winter harvest ticket hunt in Unit 19D Remainder as follows:

Current winter caribou season:

Unit 19D Remainder: November 1 – January 31

Bag limit: One caribou by harvest ticket

(Unit 21A currently has no open winter season)

Proposed winter caribou seasons:

Units 19D and 21A: November 1 – February 28 (29 during leap year)

One antlerless caribou by registration permit

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Winter caribou hunts for Beaver Mountains and Sunshine Mountains caribou herds have not been held for decades. Recent surveys suggest that caribou numbers have increased (perhaps in response to wolf reductions) but fall harvest is light. There is also a question whether adequate opportunity is being provided for subsistence solely with a fall season. This question can be laid to rest with the proposed registration permit caribou hunt. It also simplifies Unit 19D winter regulations and provides opportunity to tap into an underutilized harvestable surplus.

The Department of Fish and Game will need to limit harvest especially during the early years of this hunt. The proposed bag limit of one antlerless caribou should reduce the risk of taking cows, a quota will prevent overharvest, and a restriction on aircraft will help keep harvest within the quota. Additional discretionary permit hunt conditions are available if the department needs them.

PROPOSED BY: McGrath Fish & Game Advisory Committee

(EG-F19-048)

PROPOSAL 115

5 AAC 92.220. Salvage of game meat, furs, and hides.

Require meat to be left on the bone for caribou, moose and bison in Units 19, 21A, and 21E as follows:

The McGrath area advisory committees would like to propose making meat on the bone required for all of Units 19, 21A and 21E. This would include caribou, moose, and bison, and meat would be required to be left on the front quarters, hindquarters and ribs.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Meat on the bone requirements vary throughout the McGrath management area and we would like to make them consistent. This

will help reduce confusion and help users know what is expected of them. Meat on the bone requirements will also help with meat care in the area.

PROPOSED BY: McGrath Fish & Game Advisory Committee,
Stony Holitna Fish & Game Advisory Committee,
Central Kuskokwim Fish & Game Advisory Committee, and
GASH (Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk & Holy Cross) Fish & Game Advisory
Committee

(EG-F19-050)

PROPOSAL 116

#2020-XXX-BOG Finding

Adopt a Board of Game finding for the Unit 19A Portage Mountain Muskoxen Herd Strategy as follows:

The new Board of Game finding would state:

Unit 19A Portage Mountain Muskoxen Herd Strategy
4-16-2019
- DRAFT

Purpose: The people of the Portage Mountain Central Kuskokwim River communities desire a sustainable muskoxen population in order to facilitate subsistence harvest on the herd. This document is drafted by the Central Kuskokwim Advisory Committee (CKAC) describing our strategies to achieve our objective. It is a goal of this document to become a finding of the Board of Game 2019-2020 meeting cycle.

- 1) This strategy applies to the Unit 19A portion of the Kuskokwim River drainage Portage Mountain Muskox Herd territory as outlined in the Map 1, including the buffer zone surrounding the Portage Mountains;
- 2) Whereas, the Muskox season in this area will remain closed for four years beginning in the year 2020;
- 3) Whereas, the season will be opened in a limited number of permits only after 4 years of no hunting or there is a minimum muskox population in the Portage Mountains of 150;
- 4) Whereas, we recognize the importance of cow muskox to future muskox populations. We understand that there will be no cow hunts unless habitat degradation occurs from excessive browsing;
- 5) Whereas, it is understood that a large muskox population will serve (but not completely) the subsistence needs of the residents of this area. We fully expect, however, that as limited subsistence hunting begins on this herd, the number of muskox harvested locally will be a priority;
- 6) Whereas, enforcement has a role in this strategy that needs to be developed in a cooperative fashion;

- 7) Whereas, the CKAC desires to collaborate with the local communities in the drafting of the Portage Mountain Muskoxen Management Plan; and,
- 8) Therefore, the reward this strategy promises is substantial, and the State of Alaska Department of Fish & Game are committed to achieving the goal of at least 150 muskoxen in the Portage Mountain Muskoxen count area.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Central Kuskokwim Advisory Committee desires a sustainable Portage Mountain Muskoxen herd and requests the Board of Game to accept our strategies listed above as strategies towards achieving this goal while the draft development of a Portage Mountain Muskoxen Management Plan is underway and issue an official finding.

PROPOSED BY: Central Kuskokwim Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-100)

PROPOSAL 117

5 AAC 99.025. Customary and traditional uses of game populations.

Determine a customary and traditional use finding for grouse in Unit 19 and modify regulations to provide reasonable opportunity for subsistence take as follows:

The Alaska Board of Game should determine that Unit 19 grouses are associated with customary and traditional subsistence uses and develop regulations that provide reasonable opportunities for subsistence use of grouses in Unit 19.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Alaska Board of Game has not yet determined whether grouses are associated with customary and traditional uses in Unit 19.

PROPOSED BY: Anna Frank (EG-F19-117)

PROPOSAL 118

5 AAC 99.025. Customary and traditional uses of game populations.

Determine a customary and traditional use finding for ptarmigan in Unit 19 and modify regulations for provide reasonable opportunity for subsistence take as follows:

The Alaska Board of Game should determine that Unit 19 ptarmigans are associated with customary and traditional subsistence uses and develop regulations that provide reasonable opportunities for subsistence uses of ptarmigan in Unit 19.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Alaska Board of Game has not yet determined whether ptarmigans are associated with customary traditional uses in Game Management Unit 19.

PROPOSED BY: Anna Frank

(EG-F19-121)

PROPOSAL 119

5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.

Extend the lynx trapping season in Units 19C, 19D, and 21A as follows:

Current seasons: November 1 – March 15

Proposed seasons: November 1 – March 31

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Lynx trapping pressure in Units 19C, 19D, and 21A is a fraction of what it was in the 1980s and 1990s and harvest of lynx is lower than what the population could support so there is no biological reason to object to this proposal. Lynx trapping does not drive trapper effort in these units; marten drives effort between November and February and wolf and wolverine drive this effort between November and the end of March. Lynx are occasionally caught incidentally in wolverine and wolf traps during this time and this take will continue whether or not this proposal passes so very few additional lynx will be harvested if this proposal passes. Fur quality is variable during the proposed additional season with most hides being quite good and certainly adequate for home uses. The meat is always good. If this proposal passes, the trapper will be able to retain these lynx; there will be a reduced burden on the Department of Fish and Game and Alaska Wildlife Troopers to deal with late caught lynx; and additional opportunity will be afforded trappers with little additional lynx harvest.

The McGrath AC considered submitting this proposal for all of the McGrath area office units, but we did not because the affected committees should comment on their own preferences.

PROPOSED BY: McGrath Fish & Game Advisory Committee

(EG-F19-049)
