

Name: Bill Watkins

Community of Residence: Denali Park

Comment:

Proposal 75 - Wolf/Bear Killing Program in GMU 16 outside of both Denali and Lake Clark National Parks - Opposed

No references to populations studies of moose, wolves, grizzlies or black bears in GMU 16.

No discussion in how they determined a sustainable moose population range of figures. Nor, is there any discussion in whether the moose population is rising, falling or stable.

Due to the above, how can a sustainable hunt of moose be achieved if no studies have been done on the population as well as a census?

No discussion of habitat carrying capacity for moose as determined through recent studies or for bears and wolves.

No discussion of the condition of the moose habitat that is available in GMU 16.

No specific studies are mentioned regarding wolf numbers within the GMU 16. While the proposal does mention that a minimum count of 120 wolves took place in March of 2023, there is no mention of who did this count, what methodology they used, over what length of time, or any reference to a specific study.

Furthermore, there was no mention of any grizzly and black bear population studies within GMU 16. This is especially important due to the exceedingly low reproductive rate of grizzly bears as well as the difficulty in counting both black and grizzly bears.

Any mentioned of specific counts for both black and grizzly bears needs to be supported by recent scientific study and the methodology used. No mention of this was given in the proposal and guess work, outdated studies and/or extrapolations from them is unacceptable.

No discussion in which hunters (urban, rural, bush, out of state) that this predator control program is to benefit.

No discussion of eliminating/limiting urban and out of state hunters to grant greater moose hunting success to rural/bush communities. In fact, there was no discussion of rural/bush communities suffering from a lack of moose.

No discussion of the costs of this program for each year it is enacted up to and including 2031.

How is such a program fiscally responsible?

No discussion justifying why hunting is subsidized by state funding in predator killing proposals but no other form of recreation?

No discussion or studies on how such wolf/bear control would impact Denali & Lake Clark National Park wolf and bear population dynamics in both National Park ecosystems.

No discussion in how wolf killing disrupts the social dynamics of wolves and their family groups throughout the area. And furthermore the compensatory actions by wolves in reaction to that increased mortality.

No discussion in how increased grizzly bear control and especially females can devastate the bear population for years due to grizzlies having such a low reproductive rate.

No discussion of how harsh winters due to climate change (or other factors) can devastate the moose population far faster than any type of predation .

No discussion of the reasoning of issuing public aerial shooting permits or public land-and-shoot permits and 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.

Am opposed to having ADF&G conduct any predator killing within GMU 16.

Am opposed to having the ADF&G commissioner allow aerial/land and shoot killing of wolves and bears without any public review and comment or debate over whether such a program is fiscally responsible.

If passed, this would allow Department aerial gunning in all of Unit 16, which borders the southern half of Denali NP/Preserve and the Northeast border of Lake Clark NP/Preserve.

All of these questions need to be answered first before any type of organized wolf and bear killing program be considered.

Proposal 82 - Palmer Trapping Setbacks - Support

50 yard trapping setbacks in the Palmer area. This proposal would help protect pet dogs from being trapped by trappers and is a common sense solution.

Proposal 11 - Shorten Brown Bear Seasons Near Katmai - Support

To minimize conflicts between non-consumptive and consumptive users.

Proposal 29 - Mulchatna Caribou Herd Population Review - Support

To determine calf survival to at least one year of age, whether the Mulchatna caribou population is increasing or not and the effectiveness of the state's predator kill program.

Proposal 2 - Open two bear baiting seasons in GMU Units 9, 11, 13, 14B, 14C, 16, and 17 - Oppose

Proposal 3 - This would allow the use of cellular cameras for taking bears over bait in Units 9, 11, 13, 14B, 16, and 17. Bear baiters would be allowed to use game cameras that communicate wirelessly to locate, identify, and monitor activity at bait stations. If adopted, it would likely pursued statewide.

Oppose

Support Proposals: 11, 18, 28, 30, 31, 35, 36, 39, 42, 49, 61, 63, 80

Opposed to the following Proposals:

9, 12, 17, 32, 33, 34, 48, 57, 58, 59, 60, 70, 71, 72, 76, 77, 79,