

## **Proposal 90**

### **5 AAC 92.540. Controlled Use Areas.**

Repeal the 40 HP restriction in Holitna–Hoholitna Controlled Use Area as follows:

**What solution do you recommend? In other words, if the board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?**

Current Regulation (5 AAC 92.540(3)(B)): (3) Holitna-Hoholitna Controlled Use Area (i) the area consists of those portions of Units 19(A) and 19(B) draining into the Kuskokwim River downstream from and including the Moose Creek drainage on the north bank from and including the Stony River drainage and downstream from and including the Swift River drainage on the south bank; (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 apply to the transportation into the area of game meat that has been processed for human consumption.

Proposed Regulation Change: Repeal the 40 HP restriction in subparagraph (ii) so it reads: (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 apply to the transportation into the area of game meat that has been processed for human consumption.~~ [No horsepower restriction on boat motors.]

What would be the effect if this proposal is adopted? Hunters from GMU 18 and surrounding areas would have better access to GMU 19 hunting grounds using safer, more efficient boats. This could slightly increase hunting pressure, but existing seasons, bag limits, and reporting requirements would mitigate any conservation concerns. No significant negative impact on moose, caribou, or other big game populations is expected, as the restriction was originally intended to reduce disturbance but are no longer necessary with current management tools.

Who is likely to benefit? Local residents, subsistence users, and recreational hunters in GMUs 18 and 19 who rely on river travel for access. It would promote fairness and safety.

Who is likely to suffer? Possibly non-local hunters or those preferring low-disturbance areas, but overall impacts should be minimal.

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

The 40 horsepower (HP) boat motor restriction in the Holitna-Hoholitna Controlled Use Area (CUA) within GMU 19 limits access for hunters traveling from GMU 18 via connected waterways like the Holitna and Kuskokwim rivers. This restriction, which applies to hunting big game (including transportation of hunters, gear, or parts) from August 1 to November 1, prevents the use of boats with motors over 40 HP, even when necessary for safe navigation in strong currents, shallow waters, or long-distance travel. Residents and hunters in GMU 18 rely on these rivers for

access to hunting areas in GMU 19, but the HP limit increases travel time, fuel consumption, and safety risks (e.g., getting stuck or unable to handle river conditions). Removing this restriction would improve equitable access without negatively impacting wildlife populations, as modern boats are more efficient and the area already has other protections like bag limits and seasons. This change would support subsistence and recreational hunting while maintaining conservation goals.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?**

Yes, Bethel Advisory Committee

**PROPOSED BY:** Bethel Advisory Committee

(OI-F26-054)

\*\*\*\*\*