

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
BOARD OF GAME
MAY 20-21, 2001
Fairbanks, Alaska

DESIGNATED REPORTER: Jim Marcotte

This summary of actions is for information purposes only and not intended to detail, reflect or fully interpret reasons for Board actions.

PROPOSAL NO. 1

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Open a nonresident moose hunting season in portion of Unit 19D.

DISCUSSION: The board reviewed actions taken at the March 2000 meeting when this portion of Unit 19D was closed to nonresident hunters. The board rejected re-opening this area to nonresident hunters because of the need to reduce subsistence moose hunting in areas directly to the north and east as part of a wolf predation control program.

PROPOSAL NO. 2

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: Open a nonresident moose hunting season in portion Unit 19D.

DISCUSSION: The department explained that this proposal was similar to Proposal 1 but with a 50 square mile closure area along a Kuskokwim River corridor. The board rejected this proposal after citing the need to reduce subsistence hunting on this same moose population. The board also discussed whether a one-mile closure along the corridor was enforceable and noted advisory committee and other public opposition to proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 3

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Open a nonresident moose hunting season in portion Unit 19D.

AMENDMENTS: For Unit 19D, that portion between and including the Cheetneetnuk and Gagaryah River drainages, excluding that portion within two miles of the Swift River, non-resident season Sept. 1 – Sept. 20, 1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side.

DISCUSSION: The department indicated this 1,600 square mile area was hunted primarily by nonresidents using aircraft access. The board found that this upland area was more similar to Unit 19C and that it was outside the local community use areas and therefore did not result in an adverse impact on reasonable opportunity for subsistence. The board discussed the extent of navigability of the Swift, Cheetneetnuk, and Gagaryah rivers draining the proposed hunt area and voted to exclude a two-mile corridor along the Swift River in order to avoid user conflicts. The board noted the lack of public review in March 2000 when the nonresident hunt was closed by amendment and noted the opportunity for further changes in March 2002.

PROPOSAL NO. 4

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Replace general moose hunts with registration permit hunts within the wolf predation control implementation area in Unit 19D East.

DISCUSSION: The department described the proposal as part of package aimed at addressing the low moose population. The board indicated registration permits would give

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS MAY 20-21, 2001
BOARD OF GAME MEETING IN FAIRBANKS

managers better information on harvest. The board noted public requests to tie restrictive actions to the actual implementing predator control. Increased costs to the public were considered but found warranted in this case.

PROPOSAL NO. 5

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Create a fall black bear baiting season within the wolf predation control implementation area in Unit 19D East.

DISCUSSION: The department reported that an increased bear harvest would be sustainable and described this action as a base part of a several step program. The board considered whether there would be an impact on moose calf mortality or population levels. The board discussed an August 10 starting date and the possibility of a year-round season but chose to adopt the September 1 date as recommended by the adaptive management team.

PROPOSAL NO. 6

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Decrease moose population and harvest objectives for Unit 19D East according to recommendations of the Adaptive Wildlife Management Team.

AMENDMENTS: The board voted to specify the population objective as a minimum by adding "at least."

DISCUSSION: The department explained that the adaptive management team members wanted reasonable and achievable population and harvest objectives and recommended the proposed objectives. The board discussed a potential conflict between the lowering of the objectives and the state's intensive management law, the need to break a current policy stalemate, and not wanting to lose sight of the previously set intensive management targets. The department noted that the higher objectives would be obtainable only with sustained predator control and that there was strong opposition to such an action within the adaptive management team. The board considered retaining the higher objectives. The department noted the importance of maintaining support from the full adaptive management team as the implementation plan moves forward.

PROPOSAL NO. 7

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Modify Unit 19D East wolf predation control implementation plan to reflect lowered moose population and harvest objectives.

DISCUSSION: The board referenced their discussion on Proposal 6 and supported maintaining consistency between the implementation plan and the intensive management goals regarding moose population.

PROPOSAL NO. 8

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify the sealing requirements for wolves within the Unit 19D East wolf predation control implementation area to require sealing within 5 days of kill.

AMENDMENTS: Delete the 5-day sealing requirement and add a 10-day reporting requirement.

DISCUSSION: The department recommended a reporting requirement after receiving comments from advisory committees and others in the public. They clarified that the existing 30-day sealing requirement would be retained. The board noted the department's

practice of purchasing carcasses and the good cooperation from the public on reporting harvests.

PROPOSAL NO. 9

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Expand the Upper Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area and simplify the boundary description.

AMENDMENTS: Sunset to March 2006.

DISCUSSION: The department described a comparatively low access rate and an average harvest rate of two moose per year by hunters using aircraft. Board members emphasized the consensus process of the adaptive management team and the need for a balanced approach. Board members expressed caution for using the controlled use area alternative and concern over the difficulty of reversing the action once the implementation program concludes. A five-year sunset clause was added to address this concern and clarify the board's intent that the expansion is for a specific purpose.

PROPOSAL NO. 10

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Modify black bear sealing requirements and salvage requirements within Unit 19D East wolf predation control implementation area.

AMENDMENTS: To change the salvage requirement to specify that 1) within the wolf predation control implementation plan area both the hide and skull of a black bear must be salvaged, and 2) outside of the wolf predation control implementation plan area either the hide or the edible meat must be salvaged.

DISCUSSION: The department indicated the importance of sealing data in bear management. The board discussed different cultural practices in the use of bear meat and bear hides. The board considered deleting the requirement to salvage the skull, but decided to keep the requirement because of the need for accurate harvest data.

PROPOSAL NO. 11

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: Expand the Stampede Trail closed area in Unit 20C to the Savage River, delete the 2002 ending date, and prohibit the use of snares in the area.

AMENDMENTS: Amendments enlarged the closed area by adding all lands west of the Savage River bounded by Denali National Park, narrowed the snaring restriction to specify only wolf snaring, and inserted a sunset clause of March 31, 2003 for both provisions.

DISCUSSION: The board heard considerable public testimony on the proposal. The department explained the rationale for submitting the proposal and presented data on wolf pack distribution. Additional information addressed the importance of the Toklat Pack for non-consumptive uses. Board members discussed Park Service regulations allowing harvest on adjacent federal lands and inquired about the current Park Service policy on habituated wolves. The board identified the goal of providing protection to the Toklat Pack and amended the boundary of the closed area to include land north of the Stampede Trail. It chose against trying to provide the same protection for the Sanctuary Pack after finding the criteria for protection of that pack was not met. The methods and means restriction was changed to limiting only snares with a cable diameter of 3/32 inch or larger as a way of restricting wolf snaring while allowing snaring for other species. The board also discussed the proposed elimination of the sunset clause. Board members referenced the balance between actions taken to protect wolves in Unit 20C and actions to reduce wolf numbers in Unit 19D East. The department indicated both actions were warranted as

independent actions and cautioned against linking the two. The board amended the proposal by specifying that the provisions do not apply after March 31, 2003. In final comments, the board expressed their commitment to maintain strong healthy wolf populations in perpetuity.

PROPOSAL NO. 12

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: Clarify regulatory language for antlerless moose seasons in portion of Unit 24.

DISCUSSION: This was a housekeeping action to correct regulatory wording oversights from the March 2001 board meeting. It clarified board intent for the seasons and bag limits for the Henshaw Creek drainage and clarified the locations where antlerless moose can be taken.

Petition on Gull Eggs

The board reviewed a petition submitted by the Hoonah Indian Association regarding state cultural permits for the collection of gull eggs. The department explained that limited egg collection currently allowed under a study permit must end because the study is concluding and state permits are not available since gull eggs are not listed in 5 AAC 92.034 (permit to take game for cultural purposes). The board heard that the egg take is very limited in quantity but of high value as part of a cultural revitalization program. The board adopted a 120-day emergency regulation to take effect immediately and scheduled further action for the January 2002 statewide meeting. Regulatory wording would add "and any migratory bird for which a federal permit has been issued" to the list of game for which a permit may be issued under 5 AAC 92.034.

Petition on Unit 19A Moose

The board reviewed a permit submitted by the Central Kuskokwim Fish and Game Advisory Committee requesting a predator control implementation plan for Unit 19. The board expressed keen interest in the situation in Unit 19A but did not make a finding of emergency or adopt the request. The board referenced their actions taken to control predation in Unit 19D East. The board discussed possible solutions such as allowing the use of snowmachines to take wolves in areas outside of wolf control implementation areas. They voted to add section 5 AAC 92.080 (unlawful methods of taking game, exceptions) to the call for proposals for the January 2002 statewide Board of Game meeting.