

# Dillingham Area – Unit 17

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**PROPOSAL 47- 5 AAC 85.025(12). Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.** Extend the caribou season in Unit 17 to March 31, with options for early closures as follows:

Broaden the "book season dates" to have the official book closure March 31, with the permit language stating that in most seasons ADF&G will close the season on March 15. In the event of extremely low harvests, poor weather and hunting conditions and unavailability of animals (*or other circumstances to be listed*), ADF&G will be allowed to extend the season by Emergency Order (EO) to as late as March 31. Duration of the extension to be determined by ADF&G in consultation with the Nushagak Fish and Game Advisory Committee and other stakeholders, and may be less than the remaining 31 days.

This season would be established for the Alaska resident only registration hunt RC503 for the range of the Mulchatna caribou herd. This may require an Agenda Change Request for the other units where the Mulchatna herd resides (Units 9, 18, 19).

The August 1 opening date is to remain.

Since this is a registration hunt, ADF&G should have better in-season harvest information than before, on which to base their decision.

Adoption of this regulation is expected to reduce or eliminate the constant stream of season extension petitions to the Board of Game that has occurred during the past ten years or more.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Some years the caribou season in Units 17B and portions of 17A and 17C closes too early. Nushagak area hunters want the option of having the season extended to the end of March under certain conditions. Some years poor weather and terrible travel conditions prevent hunters from using the full August 1 to March 15 season; and sometimes caribou are only available in the last few days of March. For many years now, members of Nushagak River villages have requested ADF&G to extend the caribou season by emergency order from March 15 to March 30. They have been denied every year in part because ADF&G does not have the EO authority to extend beyond the season date established by the board. March caribou harvests are a highly valued food source for Nushagak area villages. Refer to hunting regulations (2013-2014) public summary book, page 89.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nushagak Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-218)

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**PROPOSAL 48 - 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.** Extend the resident caribou season in Units 9B and 17B as follows:

Open caribou hunting in Units 9B and 17B through March 30.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** With caribou migrating out of the area and the bag limit at two caribou, when caribou migrate down, we need more opportunity to harvest. Quality would improve because it would increase opportunity. Residents would benefit.

**PROPOSED BY:** Igiugig Village Council (EG-C14-197)  
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**PROPOSAL 49 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Extend the winter moose season by one month for Unit 17A, restrict the taking of males to antlered bulls, and reauthorize the antlerless hunt as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(15)		
Unit 17(A)		
Up to 2 moose per regulatory year only as follows:		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
1 bull by registration permit only; or	Aug. 25-Sept. 20 (Subsistence hunt only)	
<b><u>1 antlered bull by registration permit; during the period Dec. 1 –Feb. 28 a season up to 31 days may be announced by emergency order; or</u></b>	<b><u>Winter Season to be Announced by Emergency Order (Subsistence hunt only)</u></b>	
<b><u>1 antlerless moose by registration permit; during the period Dec. 1 –Feb. 28 a season up to 31 days may be announced by emergency order;</u></b>	<b><u>Winter Season to be Announced by Emergency Order (Subsistence hunt only)</u></b>	
[UP TO 2 MOOSE BY REGISTRATION PERMIT; DURING THE PERIOD DEC. 1–JAN.31, A SEASON UP TO 31 DAYS MAY BE	DEC. 1–JAN 31 SUBSISTENCE HUNT ONLY (TO BE ANNOUNCED	

ANNOUNCED  
BY EMERGENCY ORDER;]

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**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This proposal recommends two changes to the present season and bag limit for the winter moose hunt in Unit 17A. The first change is to extend the winter season by one month to provide hunters with more opportunity to harvest moose. In recent years, marginal snow conditions due to warm weather patterns have prevented hunters from accessing hunt areas with snow machines which is the main form of travel during the winter in this region. Extending the season through February will help hunters by giving managers an additional month within which to open the moose season during those years where snow conditions are not adequate for travel until late winter.

The second change we recommend is revising the hunt structure for the winter moose hunt in Unit 17A. The current bag limit for this winter hunt is stated as up to two moose by registration permit. We manage this hunt with two permits, RM575 for one bull moose, and RM576 for one antlerless moose. When these hunts are running concurrently hunters will often have both permits, and can harvest either a cow or a bull legally. However, when/if the antlerless season closes (only 10-20 moose are allowed under the RM576 hunt), hunters are limited to a bull moose and may take one without antlers. We would like to see the late season bull moose hunt changed to “one antlered bull” for several reasons, 1) by allowing the harvest of antlerless bulls, hunters might accidentally take a cow moose through mis-identification which is problematic for the hunter; and increases the harvest of cow moose above our objectives, 2) identifying an antlerless bull can be difficult and may require hunters to approach groups of moose closely, which disturbs moose that are often already stressed during the winter, and 3) we have not been able to acquire bull:100 cow ratios in this area and an “any bull” hunt exposes all bulls to harvest, while an “antlered bull” season would protect a portion of the bull population from harvest, while still providing opportunity for hunters to take bulls that retain their antlers later into the season. We therefore recommend that we retain the two permit system with suggested changes to RM575 but provide the bag limit of two moose through two separate hunts, RM575 for “one antlered bull” and RM576 for “one antlerless moose”.

This proposal also reauthorizes the antlerless portion of the hunt.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (EG-C14-333)  
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**PROPOSAL 50 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Change the locations for obtaining nonresident moose registration permits for hunting in Unit 17 as follows:

For the nonresident registration moose permit for Unit 17, hunters can obtain the permits in the following places, Dillingham, Iliamna, King Salmon. Hunters can pick up the permits from September 1 to September 10.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** I would like the board to change the locations that the nonresident moose hunt registration permits can be picked up. I

would like to see this changed to where they are available in Illiamna, Port Alsworth, and the Villages of Unit 17. I would like this changed because hunters are having to fly all the way to Dillingham to get the permits when a lot of the unit is closer to Illiamna than Port Alsworth.

**PROPOSED BY:** Phil Byrd (EG-C14-263)  
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**PROPOSAL 51 - 5 AAC 85.045 (15). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Extend the season dates for the winter moose in Units 17B and 17C with options for early closures as follows:

Change the season dates for (RM585) winter moose hunt in Unit 17.

We request the board to broaden the "official book season dates" to start December 1 and run to January 31. On the registration permit, the normal moose season would open December 1 and close December 31; however the ADF&G is authorized to extend the season closure by Emergency Order (EO) to as late as January 31 under certain "special conditions". Extension duration shall be determined by ADF&G in consultation with Nushagak Fish and Game Advisory Committee and other stakeholders. Criteria for special conditions must be specified to include: a) unusual extreme weather preventing travel and hunting activities; b) extremely low harvest rates in spite of sufficient moose abundance; c) sufficient harvest reporting (other criteria may be needed). The decision to extend the season will require good communications among area users, the Advisory Committee and ADF&G staff. The Advisory Committee recognizes that conditions may vary widely across the area of this hunt.

This season would be established for the Alaska residents only, registration moose hunt RM585.

Adopting this regulation is expected to reduce or eliminate the constant stream of season extension petitions to the Board of Game that has occurred during the past eight to ten years.

Since this is a registration hunt, ADF&G should be able to obtain good in-season harvest information on which to base their decisions. Prompt harvest reporting may have to be required.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Hunting regulations (2013-2014) public summary book page 90. Units 17B and 17C resident winter moose RM585. More and more often the winter moose hunt in Units 17B and 17C is plagued by weather conditions that make moose hunting impossible for several weeks. Nushagak area hunters want ADF&G to have the option of extending the season to compensate for bad weather and travel conditions and to improve harvest opportunity. Recently the board adopted an adjustable season for the winter moose hunt in Unit 17A. The Nushagak Advisory Committee would like a similar system adopted for Units 17B and 17C. Currently EO policy prevents the ADF&G from being more flexible. The winter of 2013/14 was a prime example of poor hunting conditions for an extended period of time and success rate was extremely low.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nushagak Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-221)  
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**PROPOSAL 52 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Adjust the nonresident closed area in Togiak National Wildlife Refuge in Unit 17A and extend the season as follows:

**5 AAC 85.045 (15) Unit 17A:** Up to two moose per regulatory year, only as follows:

RESIDENT HUNTERS: 1 bull by registration permit August 25-September 20 only; or (Subsistence hunt only) Up to two moose by registration permit December 1-January 31; (Subsistence hunt only) during the period (To be announced) December 1-January 31, a season of up to 31 days may be announced by emergency order.

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS: 1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with four or more brow tines on one side September 5 - September [15] **20**, by drawing permit only; up to 50 permits may be issued.

**Nonresident hunters may not hunt moose within two miles on either side of the main-stem of the Togiak River, Togiak Lake, the Isavenik River and Upper Togiak Lake**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Moose populations in the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge have been increasing and resident hunting seasons and bag limits are the most liberal in Alaska. There are many remote areas of the Togiak Refuge that are used very little, if at all by local residents. After a discussion with the Togiak Fish and Game Advisory Committee Chair, Togiak Refuge staff and ADF&G local staff in 2013, there was an agreement reached to open Unit 17A to nonresident moose hunting under a drawing permit with a closed area that included two miles on either side of the mainstem of the Togiak River and Lakes as well as the Isavenik River.

This agreement was in place when I left the meeting and I thought was passed by the board. When the drawing came out I noticed that the closed area included all tributaries of the Togiak River.

I assume this extra expansion of the closed area was done by local staff because it is not specified in codified. I would like to have it specified in the codified language so there is no further conflict on the issue.

The original agreement was made to eliminate conflicts with resident hunters that regularly use the Togiak River, Togiak Lake, and occasionally use the Isavenik and Upper Togiak Lake for moose hunting. The smaller tributaries are seldom used by Togiak residents because they are very small streams that are only passable with power boats at very high water levels.

This closed area effectively eliminates all float hunts in the area and virtually all nonresident moose hunting because most of the lakes that are large enough to land on are included in these drainages. There is very little wheel plane access in the area and what does exist is on the river within the closed area.

This is an unreasonable approach to manage the fastest growing, most dynamic moose herd in Alaska. Anywhere else in the state with this type of moose population the season would be open and long without any restrictions other than bag limit.

During the last two board cycles it was explained that even though the moose population has exploded in this area, nonresidents will be virtually excluded until moose in the area exceed their carrying capacity, which they are theoretically quickly approaching. I suspect this situation is no different. The season has been liberalized to include any-bull hunts, two moose bag limits, winter hunts, and cow hunts in past years, all methods to slow the growth of a herd.

**PROPOSED BY:** Aaron Bloomquist (EG-C14-190)

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**PROPOSAL 53 - 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with use of bait or scent lures.**

Allow the use of bait and lures along rivers for taking brown bear in Unit 17 and change the bag limit as follows:

I propose that the board allow us in Unit 17 to bait and use lures and to move naturally dead carcasses down river to the next available inlet or to secondary creeks getting them out of the main river. This would result in a higher percentage of hunters taking a mature boar as most of the bears that are on the system during this time of the year are mature bears. The sows along with their cubs stay out on the outer fringes of the system as they know that the big boars are hunting along the banks after coming out of hibernation. If a smaller boar gets to the carcass first one only has to wait 24 hours and a larger boar will claim it from that bear resulting in the taking of a mature bear. I propose that when the carcass has been placed in a more effective area that we post the site with a site number along with the coordinates to our local ADF&G office.

Baiting and using lure is not in any way a sure thing, in fact it is kind of a long shot in getting a bear, however it would give us another tool to use that may help. The utilization of winter moose kills is a very effective way to remove mature boars. I can only see positive things for a program like this and don't see any problems that it would cause, and it would affect no one negatively. I would also propose that we do away with the two bear regulation as it only hurts the overall health of the bear population and does nothing to treat the real problem.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Brown bear - two bear issue. For years ADF&G along with guides and hunters have been trying to figure out a way to manage the brown bear numbers along the Nushagak River and all its tributaries including the Mulchatna River. The bears that live along these rivers are more of a forest dwelling bear, catching a glimpse of them is usually the only sign you see of them. The "common" way to hunt bears is spotting them from a distance then plan a stalk after glassing miles of country. However, here on the river system the bears rely heavily on their trails that go throughout the forest system rarely coming out along the banks. This obviously poses a problem for effectively managing their numbers and removing the older more mature boars. Increasing the number of bears one can shoot along with longer hunting season's doesn't change the way that one hunts them, that problem stays the same. Increasing the number of bears a hunter can shoot results in clients and other hunters shooting smaller bears and does very little in taking the older more mature boars

that have lived on the river for at least ten years and know how to effectively kill adult moose and have honed their skills in catching moose calves during the calving season. The techniques are quite different. One effective way to remove the older boars from this area is to be able to utilize the winter kill moose carcasses that get washed down the system during the spring floods

The method and means is the same for a forest dwelling bear as a bear on Kodiak or the Peninsula that carcasses get deposited on sand bars out in the middle of the river. I have watched carcasses stay for weeks on an island with no bears finding them; eventually only the birds clean up the animal.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jason Mogen (EG-C14-247)

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**PROPOSAL 54 - 5 AAC 92.220. Salvage of game meat, furs, and hides.** Allow the sale of brown bear hides and skulls in Unit 17 by resident hunters as follows:

Allow resident hunters to sell the hides with claws and/or skulls of legally taken brown bears harvested in Unit 17.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Refer to hunting regulations (2013- 2014) public summary book page 17. Use of game: Buying and selling of brown bear parts.

The abundant population of brown bears in Unit 17 needs reduction to reduce predation on moose and caribou and reduce bear hazards around area communities. The current two per year bag limit is generous but individuals are limited in their ability to use brown bear hides and skulls. We need economic incentives to encourage the harvest of more brown bears. It has been too difficult to get brown bears included in local predator control programs and this might be a helpful alternative.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nushagak Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-219)

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**PROPOSAL 55 - 5 AAC 84.270. Trapping seasons and bag limits, and 92.095(3). Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions.** Remove the bag limit and modify the salvage requirements for harvesting beaver with a firearm during the trapping season in Unit 17, and allow the harvest with bow and arrow as follows:

In Unit 17 under beaver trapping regulations, allow the use of firearms or bow and arrow for beaver trapping October 10 to May 31 with no daily or seasonal limit. No requirement to salvage meat for human consumption. Meat or hide must be salvaged for use.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Trapping regulations (2013-2014), public summary book page 31, Beaver trapping. Nushagak area trappers want to be able to use firearms or bow and arrow to take beaver the whole trapping season from October 10 to May 31 with no daily or season limit. Requiring salvage of meat for human consumption when

firearms are used is too burdensome especially if firearms are allowed all season. Meat should be allowed to be used for trap bait and other nonhuman uses as well. With more and more of the season having open water, and fewer and fewer active beaver trappers, the remaining trappers should be allowed to use firearms all season.

**PROPOSED BY:** Nushagak Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-220)  
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**PROPOSAL 56 - 5 AAC 84.270(1). Trapping seasons and bag limits, and 92.095(3). Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions.** Remove the bag limit and the requirement to salvage meat for human consumption for beaver taken with a firearm during trapping season in Unit 17 as follows:

It is against the law to take beaver by any means other than a steel trap or snare except: **In Unit 17, a firearm may be used to take beaver during the established season and with no bag limits.** [IN UNIT 17, A FIREARM MAYBE USED TO TAKE 2 BEAVER PER DAY PROVIDED THAT THE MEAT IS SALVAGED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Allow the use of a firearm to take beaver throughout the trapping season. Currently we can take two beaver per day with a firearm for a small portion of the season and I would like this changed to an unlimited amount of beaver a day through the entire season. This would allow for the harvest of beaver that are digging out of their houses mid-winter due to starving and would not require us to consume them if they are taken by a firearm vs. trapping. It would also clear up a somewhat conflicting regulation where I can trap as many beaver as I want in a day but can only harvest two with a firearm and must consume the two I shoot. This seems to currently be almost unenforceable as I do not see how it can be certain that a shot beaver is eventually consumed or if it is disposed of in some other manner. This would also allow us to harvest beaver with a firearm that we see while trapping in the fall.

**PROPOSED BY:** Todd Fritze (EG-C14-217)  
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**PROPOSAL 57 -5 AAC 84.270. Trapping seasons and bag limits, and 92.095(3). Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions.** Modify the trapping season dates and bag limit for beaver in Unit 17, and prohibit the taking of beaver with firearm as follows:

The solution I recommend is to go back to the seasons start and bag limit as it was in past years season would open November 10 (as all other furbearers start date is in Unit 17) close March 31 with a bag limit of 40 beavers and prohibit the taking of beaver with the use of a fire arm.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** I would like to have the board address the over harvesting of beaver in unit 17C, the lower part of the Nushagak River. Due to the current regulations the beaver population on the lower part of the Nushagak have fallen to almost nothing, one is hard pressed to find a beaver house anywhere a boat can go.

**PROPOSED BY:** Chris Carr

(EG-C14-20)

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