

Palmer Area – Units 14A, 14B, & 16

PROPOSAL 96 - 5 AAC 84.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunts in Units 14A and 14B as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(12)		
Unit 14(A) 1 moose per regulatory year, only as follows:		
...		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 1000 antlerless moose permits may be issued	Aug. 20-Sept. 25 (General hunt only) Nov. 1-Dec. 15 (General hunt only)	No open season
...		
1 moose by targeted permit only; and by shotgun or archery only; up to 200 permits may be issued	Winter season to be announced (General hunt only)	No open season
Unit 14(B)		
1 moose per regulatory year, only as follows:		
...		
1 moose by targeted permit only; and by shotgun or archery only; up to 100 permits may be issued	Winter season to be announced (General hunt only)	No open season
...		

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually by the Board. There are two types of antlerless moose hunts in the Mat-Su Valley, a drawing permit hunt used to regulate growth of the moose population in Unit 14A and targeted hunts used to mitigate public safety concerns in Units 14A and 14B.

Moose surveys conducted in November 2013 resulted in an estimate of 8,500 moose in Unit 14A with a bull ratio of 21 bulls:100 cows and a calf ratio of 45 calves:100 cows. This estimate was greater than the post-hunt objective of 6,000 – 6,500 moose and is an increase from the results of the 2011 survey that produced an estimate of 8,000 moose.

Based on current projections, the Unit 14A moose population is expected to grow and continue to exceed population objectives. If the density of moose is allowed to increase, we anticipate an increase in the number of moose-human conflicts, and moose may experience nutritional stress as the population nears carrying capacity. Cow harvests are warranted to control the moose population's growth and recommended as a way to provide additional moose hunting opportunity in the Mat-Su Valley.

The targeted moose hunts in Units 14A and 14B are an effective tool to address public safety concerns related to moose-vehicle collision and nuisance management issues. Moose-vehicle collisions result in property damage and may result in human injury or death. An average of 266 moose per year were killed in the Mat-Su Valley area during the last few years of average snowfall and substantially more were killed during higher snowfall years. ADF&G also receives periodic complaints from the public about crop depredation and aggressive behavior that can be mitigated by this hunt structure.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (EG-C14-338)

PROPOSAL 97 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Establish a resident, late-season archery hunt for moose in Units 14A and 14B as follows:

For Units 14A and 14B, one bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with three or more brow tines on at least one side, by bow and arrow only, residents with a regular harvest ticket.

Season date would start five days after the firearm season closed and will last ten days. Example: if the firearm season closes September 25, October 1-10 for a late season archery moose hunt.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A "late" season archery moose hunt in Unit 14 for residents only. This late season hunt would begin five days after the firearm season closes, and would be for bulls only with the same antler requirements as firearm season, and would last for ten days.

This late season archery-only moose hunt would benefit resident bowhunters, who will need to complete an International Bowhunter Education Program course, including demonstrating shooting proficiency to utilize their skills outside the firearms season.

A late season hunt benefits these resident hunters because the weather conditions are cooler and drier, which is conducive to better meat care and less potential for spoilage. There will be less foliage which will allow for greater shot accuracy and will also aid in the locating and recovery of downed animals.

PROPOSED BY: Jeff Warner

(EG-C14-302)

PROPOSAL 98 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Open a late-season archery-only hunt for moose in Unit 16 as follows:

For both Units 16A and 16B, one bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with three or more brown tines as at least one side, by bow and arrow only, residents and nonresidents with a regular harvest ticket.

Season date would start five days after the firearm season closed and will last ten days. Using the example from the 2013 moose season for Unit 16, the dates would be October 1-10 for a late season archery moose hunt. In 2013, the moose season was from August 20-September 25.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A late season archery only moose hunt in Unit 16 for both residents and nonresidents. The late season archery only moose hunt would occur five days after the firearm season closed and would be for bulls with the same requirements as the firearm season, and would last for ten days.

A late season archery-only moose season would benefit bowhunters, who by July 2016 will need to have completed an International Bowhunter Education Program and have their certification in their possession to hunt big game in Alaska with a bow and arrow, demonstrate their ethics and utilize their skills outside of the firearm season. Additionally, the moose population in Unit 16 has rebounded significantly since the inception of the predator control permit program for black bear.

A late season archery-only moose hunt would benefit both moose, and bowhunters, because the weather would be cooler and drier and there would be fewer insects, and therefore less potential for meat spoilage. There would be less vegetation (foliage) and less ground cover which would aid in the recovery of downed game. Bowhunters need to be much closer to the game than hunters using a firearm, and the reduced foliage has the potential to allow for greater accuracy using bow and arrow.

PROPOSED BY: James Weise

(EG-C14-300)

PROPOSAL 99 - 5 AAC 84.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt on Kalgin Island in Unit 16B as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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(14)

...

Unit 16(B), Kalgin Island
1 moose per regulatory year,
by registration permit only

Aug. 20 - Sept. 20

Aug. 20 - Sept. 20

...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually. The population objective for this predator-free, 23-mi² island is 20-40 moose, a density of 1-1.75 moose/mi². During a December 2012 survey, ADF&G staff counted 104 moose, approximately 4.5 moose/mi².

Because of concerns of over-population and deteriorating habitat conditions, a drawing permit hunt for cows was initiated in 1995. In an attempt to reduce the population quickly, the board established a registration hunt for any moose for the fall 1999 season. The population of moose on Kalgin Island is high at this time and remains above the objective of 20-40.

The "any moose" registration hunt is recommended to provide additional mortality on this predator-free island population. A registration hunt also allows ADF&G to continue gathering biological information from specimens provided by successful hunters. The difficult hunting conditions and limited access will minimize the danger of over-harvest.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (EG-C14-342)

PROPOSAL 100 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Allow brown bear to be taken over bait in Unit 14B as follows:

I recommend allowing grizzlies to be taken over bait one every regulatory year. All salvage requirements as black bear are now for this unit.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the board to address the number of grizzly bears in Unit 14B. I think the numbers are very high and it would benefit moose population if we lowered the numbers

PROPOSED BY: Austin Bulawa (EG-C14-191)

PROPOSAL 101 - 5AAC 92.108 Identified big game prey populations and objectives and 92.122. Intensive Management Plan VI. Review and modify the Unit 16 predation control plan as follows:

5AAC 92.108. Identified big game prey populations and objectives.

Population	Finding	Population Objective	Harvest Objective
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...

Moose

...

GMU 16(B) (mainland)	Positive	6,500 – 7,000	310 – 600
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...

5 AAC 92.122. Intensive Management Plan VI. (a) is entirely deleted and replaced by the following..

...

(a) Plan established. The intensive management plan for the Unit 16 Predation Control Area is established in this section.

(b) Unit 16 Predation Control Area: the Unit 16 Predation Control Area is established, which is focused primarily on mainland Unit 16(B), and consists of all lands within the mainland portion of Unit 16(B) and that portion of Unit 16(A) west of a line beginning at the confluence of the Yentna and Susitna Rivers, then northerly along the western bank of the Susitna River to the confluence with the Deshka River, then northerly to 61° 48.80' N. lat., 150° 21.77' W. long., then west to 62° 01.47' N. lat., 150° 24.06' W. long., then north to the northern end of Trapper Lake at 62° 01.47' N. lat., 150° 16.67' W. long., then west to 62° 01.47' N. lat., 150° 24.06' W. long., then north to 62° 09.65' N. lat., 150° 24.06' W. long., then west to the southwestern end of Amber Lake at 62° 09.65' N. lat., 150° 33.42' W. long., then north to 62° 18.03' N. lat., 150° 33.42' W. long., then west to 62° 18.03' N. lat., 150° 51.04' W. long., then north to 62° 27.97' N. lat., 150° 51.04' W. long., then west to the Denali National Park boundary at 62° 27.97' N. lat., 151° 09.22' W. long., encompassing approximately 11,105 square miles;; notwithstanding any other provision in this titl, 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 wolf and black bear and brown bear population regulation program in the Unit 16 Predation Control Area.

(1) This is a continuing control program that was first authorized by the board in 2004 for wolf control and was modified by the board to authorize black bear control in 2007 and brown bear control in 2011; it is currently designed to increase moose numbers and harvest by reducing predation on moose and is expected to make a contribution to achieving the intensive management (IM) objectives in Unit 16.

(2) Moose, wolf, black bear and brown bear objectives are as follows:

(A) Moose IM objectives established by the board for Unit 16(B) are 6,500 – 7,500 moose with a sustainable annual harvest of 310 – 600 moose; This population is composed of subpopulations that reside within in the unit; however, a subpopulation from the flanks of Mount Yenlo and in the upper Lake Creek drainage mixes in winter with moose from Unit 16(A) in the Kahiltna River drainage, and a subpopulation from the flanks of Mount Susitna and the

drainages of Alexander Creek and lower Yentna River winters with moose from Units 14(A), 14(B), and 16(A) in the lower Yentna and Susitna Rivers;

(B) the wolf control objective is to reduce the population to between 22 and 45 wolves in mainland portion of Unit 16(B);

(C) the black bear control objective is to reduce the population to 600 black bears in the mainland portion of Unit 16(B);

(D) the brown bear control objective is to reduce the population to a minimum of 250 brown bears in the mainland portion of Unit 16(B);

(3) Board findings concerning populations and humans use are as follows:

(A) the population objectives for moose in mainland Unit 16(B) are not being met, largely due to high predator numbers and the inability of the moose population to recover given the high predation rates;

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

(C) a reduction in wolf and bear predation in the mainland portion of Unit 16(B) and portions of Unit 16(A) can reasonably be expected to make progress towards achieving the Unit 16(B) intensive management objectives for moose;

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

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

(4) Authorized methods and means are as follows:

(A) hunting and trapping of wolves by the public in the Unit 16 Predation Control Area during the term of the program will 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 issue public aerial shooting permits or public land and shoot permits as a method of wolf removal under AS 16.05.783;

(C) hunting of black and brown bears by the public in the Unit 16 Predation Control Area during the term of the program will occur as provided in the hunting regulations set out elsewhere in this title;

(D) the commissioner may issue public bear control permits to reduce the black bear and brown bear populations within the Unit 16 Predation Control Area by the following methods and means:

(i) legal animal is any black bear, including sows and cubs, and any brown bear, except sows with cubs of the year, and cubs of the year;

(ii) no bag limit;

(iii) same-day-airborne taking of black bears if the permittee is at least 300 feet from the airplane;

(iv) same-day-airborne taking of bears if the permittee is at least 300 feet from the aircraft, including the use of any type of aircraft, such as fixed-wing aircraft or helicopter, to access bear baiting stations from April 15 through October 15, except that helicopters may not be used from August 5 through September 25;

(v) April 15 through October 15 baiting season for bears; up to four bear bait stations per permittee;

(vi) same-day-airborne taking of bears if the permittee is at least 300 feet from the aircraft, including the use of any type of aircraft, such as fixed-wing aircraft and helicopter, from April 15 through October 15, except that a helicopter may not be used from August 5 through September 25; a helicopter may be used only to transport resident permittees, gear, and harvested bears and parts of bears directly to and from a foot-snaring camp; up to 10 helicopter permits may be issued to helicopter pilots; helicopter permits may be issued at the discretion of the department and a permittee must attend a department-approved orientation course;

(vii) taking of bears by foot snaring by permit only from April 15 through October 15; permittees must be accompanied by another person, age 16 or older, when conducting foot snaring activities in the field; foot snaring permits will be issued at the discretion of the department based on previous trapping experience, ability to help train other participants, and length of time available for participation in a snaring program; a selected foot snaring permittee must successfully complete a department-approved training program, must be a resident 16 years of age or older, and report all animals taken by the permittee to the department within 48 hours of taking;

(viii) foot snares may only be placed on the ground directly under the bucket snare, or in buckets, and must be checked by the permittee at least once each day;

(ix) all brown bears that are cubs of the year or a sow accompanied by cubs of the year incidentally snared must be immediately reported to the department; if

practicable, an incidentally snared brown bear will be released by department staff; hides and skulls of incidentally snared brown bears are the property of the state and must be salvaged and delivered to the department;

(5) Time frame is as follows:

(A) through July 1, 2021, the commissioner may authorize the removal of wolves, black bears and brown bears in the Unit 16 Predation Control Area;

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

(6) The commissioner will review, modify or suspend program activities as follows:

(A) when the mid-point of intensive management objectives for the moose population are achieved;

(B) when wolf population surveys or accumulated information from permittees indicate the need to avoid reducing wolf numbers below the midpoint of the intensive management objective of 22 – 45 wolves specified in this subsection;

(C) when black bear population inventories or accumulated information from permittees indicate the need to avoid reducing black bear numbers below the management objective of 600 black bears specified in this subsection;

(D) when brown bear population inventories or accumulated information from permittees indicate the need to avoid reducing brown bear numbers below the management objective of 250 brown bears specified in this subsection;

(E) if after 3 years if the harvest of predators is not sufficient to make progress towards the intensive management population objectives for wolves, black bears or brown bears; the program may be temporarily suspended for one or more of the predator species;

(F) predator control activities may be terminated:

(i) if after 3 years, fall calf-to-cow ratios show no appreciable increase;

(ii) if after 3 years, there is no detectable increase in the total number of moose in the control area;

(iii) when the moose population and harvest objectives within the Unit 16(B) predator control area have been met .

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? To comply with protocol for intensive management plans, ADF&G is introducing new regulatory language for the intensive management plan for the Unit 16B predator control area and will present an operational plan to guide the implementation of the program during the February 2015 Board of Game meeting. These documents incorporate guidance the board gave to ADF&G after the board reviewed the intensive management plan for the Unit 16B predator control area during the February 2013 Board of Game meeting. This proposal also allows the board to modify the programs objectives and give further guidance to ADF&G if warranted.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (EG-C14-343)

PROPOSAL 102 - 5 AAC 85.015. Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear, and 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Establish a fall season for hunting black and brown bear over bait in Unit 16 as follows:

Brown and black bear may be taken over bait by residents and nonresidents in all of Unit 16 except for Denali State Park, August 25- October 15.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We would like to see a fall season for hunting brown and black bear over bait in all of Unit 16, except for Denali State Park. There is an overabundance of both brown and black bears in this area that are taking up to 70% of moose calves. This area is heavily timbered with difficult access and this would be a good way to get an increase in the harvest of brown and black bears.

PROPOSED BY: Mat-Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-215)

PROPOSAL 103 - 5 AAC 92.530. Management areas. Establish the Hatcher's Pass Youth Management Area in Unit 14A, for small game hunting as follows:

Hatcher's Pass Youth Management Area:

(A) the area consists of that portion of Unit 14A within the upper Little Susitna River drainage upstream of mile 13.6 on Hatcher Pass Road (Gold Mint Trail parking area) and ¼ mile away from the road including Archangel and Fishhook creeks, and upper Little Susitna River drainages. Also, portions of the upper Willow Creek drainage upstream of the confluence of Willow and Craigie creeks, including Grubstake Gulch and Homestake creeks, Summit Lake, and Bullion and Skyscraper mountains. There is no discharge of firearms allowed within ¼ mile of the road.

(B) from August 10 to August 25, the area is closed to small game hunting except that small game may be taken by youth hunters 16 years old or younger accompanied by a licensed hunter 18 years old or older who has successfully completed a certified hunter education course if the

youth has not successfully completed a certified hunter education course. Youth hunters and accompanying adults must wear hunter orange vests while in the field.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? As the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Valley has grown over the past 10-15 years so has the number of families and adults hoping to introduce young hunters to small game (grouse, ptarmigan, and hare) hunting. However, the dramatic increase in human density there has increased hunting pressure placed on local small game populations, specifically grouse and ptarmigan. As a result, overall abundance of grouse and ptarmigan populations has declined within the road accessible portions of the Mat-Su Valley. Youth hunters and those that are accompanying them continue to face increased competition for this declining resource. A youth hunting location in the heavily populated Mat-Su Valley would provide youth hunters and those that accompany them an easily accessible opportunity to hunt small game before the school year begins, while the weather is relatively warm, and populations of grouse and ptarmigan are accessible.

PROPOSED BY: Mat-Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C14-244)

PROPOSAL 104 - 5 AAC 85.060. Hunting seasons and bag limits for fur animals. Open a general hunt with no closed season and no bag limit for beaver in Unit 16B as follows:

Open beaver for a general hunting season in Unit 16B. Under the fur animals section for beaver of the hunting regulations, move the Unit 16B beaver to the section with the other units that have beaver open for no limit and no closed season.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? To open beaver for a general hunting season in Unit 16B. The beaver numbers are very overpopulated for the area. Every pond has at least one beaver lodge and several lakes have four or more lodges. Each lodge could have as many as 12 beaver living there. The beavers are starting to dam the salmon streams and flood out habitat vital to the other species living there. Very few, if any, beavers are harvested by trappers in Unit 16B during the trapping season, it's simply too difficult to have an impact when there's three to four feet of ice. A hunting season will slowly bring the beaver numbers back to a healthy population. If beaver numbers are not lowered then more habitat will be destroyed, salmon will be impacted on their travels upstream, private property in the unit will be damaged, and there is always a greater risk of disease spreading within and outside of Unit 16B; diseases such as Giardiasis, Hepatitis A, Salmonella, Campylobacter and Cryptosporidium which can all be caused by beaver.

PROPOSED BY: Steven Perrins II (EG-C14-265)

PROPOSAL 105 - 5 AAC 95.505. Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. Expand the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge as follows:

AS 16.05.255(a)(1) states that the Board of Game may "set apart" game reserves and refuges subject to legislative approval. the Board of Fisheries has a similar authority under AS 16.05.251(a)(1). I propose the following action:

The Board(s) of Game (and Fisheries) hereby sets aside lands described below, acquired and transferred to the State for addition to Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge, for enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and related public uses of the refuge.

Additions to include the formerly named M'Karzel, Williams, Fritzler, Cassity, and Cope parcels, and any other similarly situated acquisitions in state ownership.

In addition, the board(s) requests the Alaska Legislature to approve this action by amending AS 16.20.032 to include the additions.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Since 1990, ADF&G has collaborated with public and private partners to acquire inholdings and parcels adjacent to Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge from willing sellers to consolidate and add land to the refuge for fish and wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing, secure public access and facilitate outdoor education and other compatible uses. Five primary parcels, comprising over 1,360 acres have been purchased for over \$310,000 of public and private funds and transferred to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources with conservation easements for incorporation into Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. Over the past 20 years, no legislative action has affirmatively added these parcels to the refuge, either because ADF&G and past administrations have not been successful in moving a bill or because no sponsors have acted.

It is important, if only for completing valuable good faith conservation actions, to request addition of these parcels to the refuge so ADF&G can manage these lands consistent with refuge goals and management plans and address current issues.

PROPOSED BY: Thomas Rothe (EG-C14-301)
