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Advisory Announcement

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Federally Managed Public Lands Closed to Non-Federally Qualified Caribou & Moose Hunters in Portions of Units 23 and 26A

(Juneau) – On Wednesday, March 30th the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) closed, over the objection of the State, certain federal public lands in northwest Alaska to non-federally qualified caribou and moose hunters. Non-federally qualified hunters are Alaska residents not residing in communities or Game Management Units identified by the FSB, and all nonresident hunters. For caribou hunting, the FSB closed the Noatak National Preserve, which is mostly within Unit 23, but also includes the Nigu River portion of the Preserve in Unit 26A; and lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management located between the Noatak and Kobuk rivers in Unit 23. The closure will apply from August 1-September 30 during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 regulatory years.

The FSB also excluded non-federally qualified users from hunting moose on all federal public lands in Unit 23 Aug 1 – Sept 30 during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 regulatory years.

State and private lands are not affected by the closures including gravel bars below mean high water on navigable waterways. Hunters may learn more about accessing navigable waters in Alaska by visiting the Department of Natural Resources' navigability page at: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/paad/nav/unlocking-alaska/>, and their navigable waters map, <https://mapper.dnr.alaska.gov/map#map=4> . Hunters should familiarize themselves with landownership and attain permission before entering private lands. Additional caribou and moose hunting opportunities are available across the state and information is available on the Alaska Department of Fish & Game website at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/> or by visiting a Regional or Area Wildlife Conservation office.

The State has not modified its regulations in response to this federal action. We commented on the record that the action was not necessary or justified and violated provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Claim Act. We are analyzing our options, including a potential legal challenge this federal action. Alaska Department of Fish and Game will not offer refunds for hunting licenses and big game locking tags affected by these closures.

For additional information about the closures and the federal subsistence regulations go to <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/wildlife>, or contact the Office of Subsistence Management at (907) 786-3888 or (800) 478-1456.

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