

To: Greg Encelewski, Southcentral Regional Advisory Council Chair
Subject: **Chugach National Forest update for Southcentral Regional Advisory Council; 2023**

Staff

Deyna Kuntzsch – Forest Resources & Planning Staff Officer; Anchorage

Andrew Sanders – Forest Subsistence Biologist; Cordova

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Steve Namitz – District Ranger, In-season manager; Cordova

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Andy Morse – Chugach NF Law Enforcement Officer, Cordova

Jordan Rymer - Chugach NF Law Enforcement Officer, Moose Pass

Special actions

SRD-2023-WSA-01: Special Action closing the Federal Subsistence Draw hunts for dall sheep in the Round Mountain and Crescent Lake hunt areas. A public meeting was held on June 28th and no public testimony was provided.

Cost Share with Alaska Department of Fish and Game

The Chugach National Forest Subsistence Program is continuing to support wildlife surveys for mountain goats in Units 6 and 7 through a cost share agreement with ADFG. This continues ongoing cooperative monitoring projects.

Cost Share with Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC)

The Chugach National Forest Subsistence Program has entered into an ANILCA agreement with CRRC to perform surveys for fish and wildlife populations important to subsistence users in CRRC member communities within the exterior boundaries of the CNF (Chenega, Tatitlek, and Cordova). The first cooperative project under this agreement will be aerial surveys of the Kings Bay moose population.

Prince William Sound Zone

Moose

Season opened September 1

878 applications received for 44 moose permits

24 bull permits and 20 antlerless permits issued for Unit 6C in 2023

Bull and antlerless seasons still open. Final harvest numbers not yet available.

Deer

Season opened August 1 and runs through January 31. In Unit 6, 5 deer may be taken, but only 1 can be harvested in January. Does may be taken between October 1 and December 31.

El Niño conditions may result in a mild winter for deer. Pellet surveys in the spring suggest that the PWS deer population suffered low-moderate winter mortality and is currently at moderate density levels.

Black Bear

Work has continued with ADF&G on the cooperative Prince William Sound Black Bear project. ADF&G and the Forest Service are currently analyzing data and completing reports.

Unit 6D Mountain Goat:

- Season: Aug.20 – Feb. 28
- 4 permits issued as of 08/29/2023
- One goat harvested in RG242 as of 8/29/2023

Salmon

- Freshwaters of the Chugach NF, outside the Copper River
 - 84 permits issued as of 8/29/2023
 - Harvest data not available yet
- Lower Copper River Dipnet Fishery
 - 70 permits issued
 - 176 Sockeye harvested (preliminary data)
 - 4 Chinook harvested (preliminary data)

Kenai Peninsula Zone

The Federal Subsistence Board in February 2023 voted to approve cultural and traditional use determination for Moose Pass residents for the Kenai River Fishery. The rule was not published in the federal registry prior to the Kenai River fishing season opening date. On June 15th the Federal Subsistence Board approved an administrative Emergency Special Action, to enact the customary and traditional use determination, allowing Moose Pass residents the opportunity to participate in the Kenai River Federal season for 60 days.

Five community meetings were held from May through early August to issue fishing and hunting permits in person to residents of Cooper Landing, Moose Pass, and Hope.

- May 16th –Fish permit meeting in Hope at Bear Creek Lodge
- June 18th – Fish permit meeting in Moose Pass at Estes Brothers Grocery
- July 25th – Hunting permit meeting at the Cooper Landing Community Center
- July 26th - Hunting permit meeting at Moose Pass Community Center
- August 2nd - Hunting permit meeting in Hope at Bear Creek Lodge

Unit 7 Dall Sheep:

- Season: Aug.10 – Sept.20

- A public hearing was held on June 28th, to discuss closing the Federal subsistence drawing hunt for Dall Sheep in the Round Mountain and Crescent Lake hunt areas within Unit 7. Ariel surveys conducted by ADF&G showing no harvestable surplus of full curl rams and low population numbers were of highest concern. No public comment was received during the public meeting and a temporary special action was issued on July 18th, 2023 closing the Federal subsistence drawing hunt for Dall Sheep. The remainder of Unit 7 remained open to Dall Sheep hunting under state regulations.

Unit 7 Moose:

- Season: Aug.20 – Sept. 25
- 76 permits were issued as of 8/29/23
- No harvest has been reported as of 8/29/23

Unit 7 Caribou:

- Season: Aug.10 – Dec.31
- 53 of permits were issued as of 8/29/23
- No harvest has been reported as of 8/29/23

Unit 7 Mountain Goat:

- Season: Aug.10 – Nov. 14
- The Federal subsistence Mountain Goat drawing for Unit 7 was held on April 3rd, 2023. Applicants consisted of 39 residents from Cooper Landing, Hope, Ninilchik and Moose Pass. First place winner chose subunit DG341 (Cecil Rhodes), second place chose subunit DG334 (Mills Creek), and third place was given the final subunit DG338 (Crescent Mountain).
- No harvest has been reported as of 8/29/23

Salmon

- Harvest data not yet available.