

WP14-52

Name: North Slope Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Date: February 27, 2013

Organization: Office of Subsistence Management

Address: Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Contact: Eva Patton, Council Coordinator

Phone: 907-786-3358

1: What Regulation do you wish to change?

Unit 26A —Brown Bear

Unit 26A—1 bear by State registration permit only. July 1–June 30

___.26(n)(26)(iii) You may hunt brown bear in Unit 26A by State registration permit in lieu of a resident tag if you have obtained a State registration permit prior to hunting. Aircraft may not be used in any manner for brown bear hunting under the authority of a brown bear State registration permit, including transportation of hunters, bears, or parts of bears; however, this does not apply to transportation of bear hunters or bear parts by regularly scheduled flights to and between communities by carriers that normally provide scheduled service to this area, nor does it apply to transportation of aircraft to or between publicly owned airports..

2: How would the new regulation read?

Unit 26A—Brown Bear

Unit 26A—1 bear ~~by State~~ registration permit only. July 1–June 30

___.26(n)(26)(iii) ~~You may hunt brown bear in Unit 26A by State registration permit in lieu of a resident tag if you have obtained a State registration permit prior to hunting. Aircraft may not be used in any manner for brown bear hunting under the authority of a brown bear State registration permit, including transportation of hunters, bears, or parts of bears; however, this does not apply to transportation of bear hunters or bear parts by regularly scheduled flights to and between communities by carriers that normally provide scheduled service to this area, nor does it apply to transportation of aircraft to or between publicly owned airports.~~

3: Why should this regulation change be made?

The Council wishes to eliminate the requirement for State registration permit to take brown bear in Unit 26A on Federal lands in order to align State and Federal regulations on the taking of brown bear. Removing the State permit requirement would ease confusion about hunting regulations for communities on federal lands in the Unit so that a bear could be harvested if encountered around an ice cellar or family cabin or camp site without the worry that a State permit may be required for the harvest to be legal. The Council notes that in many communities it may be difficult for residents to get clear information on overlapping State and Federal regulations; aligning them in this case would help alleviate this confusion and make the process more streamlined and efficient.

4: What impact will this change have on wildlife populations?

The Council notes brown bear populations are quite healthy in the area and are frequently seen. Eliminating the requirement for a State permit only reduces the regulatory burden but would not greatly increase bear harvest in the area. The season and harvest limit of one bear remains the same.

5: How will this change affect subsistence uses?

It would increase the opportunity for hunters to hunt a brown bear if encountered while hunting caribou or if a bear was disturbing a cabin or ice cellar. Eliminating the State permit requirement would allow flexibility to hunt brown bear opportunistically without needing to plan in advance and secure a permit.

6: How will this change affect other uses, such as sport/recreational and commercial?

No effect – it would only align regulations with the State for residents and non-residents alike.

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1: What Regulation do you wish to change?

Unit 26A —Moose

Unit 26A – that portion west of 156°00'W. Long. and excluding the Colville River drainage – 1 moose; however you may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf. July 1 – Sept. 14

2: How would the new regulation read?

Unit 26A—Moose

Unit 26A – that portion west of ~~156°00'W. Long.~~ 155°00'W. Long. and excluding the Colville River drainage – 1 moose; however you may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf. July 1 – Sept. 14

3: Why should this regulation change be made?

Moving the longitude boundary to the east to 155°00'W. Long. will allow for the moose hunt to occur in the Alaktak and Chipp River drainage, which are otherwise located outside of the current regulatory boundaries. The council noted that approximately 40 people from Barrow are familiar with the Chipp River and some have camps that can be accessed by boat. Being able to hunt moose in the Chipp River drainage would help reduce the burden for hunters having to stage far away from the river in order to hunt moose, which takes a lot of time and money for gas and makes transport rigorous and difficult. Having the Chipp River included in the moose hunt area would allow people who have camps to take a moose near their cabin on the occasion a moose does come into the area.

4: What impact will this change have on wildlife populations?

The Council noted that this regulation boundary change would likely not increase the harvest of the moose population by much, as they only occasionally see moose on the drainage. The Council noted that access is already limited to this area depending on when Dease Inlet ice opens up in the summer and usually high water flow does not occur to get far up river until later in the fall. The harvest allowance would remain the same thus the Council expected impact to the population would be minimal.

5: How will this change affect subsistence uses?

The Council expressed the few moose that may be able to be accessed on the Chipp River would greatly help families who hunt in the area – making access less costly and easier to transport moose meat back.

It would allow hunters who have camps in the area harvest a moose on the occasion one does migrate by.

6: How will this change affect other uses, such as sport/recreational and commercial?

The moose hunt in Unit 26 is only open to Rural residents of Unit 26 (except the Prudhoe Bay- Deadhorse Industrial Complex) Anaktuvuk Pass, and Point Hope.

It will not affect sport/recreation or commercial uses.

WP14-54

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Contact: Eva Patton, Council Coordinator

Phone: 907-786-3358

1: What Regulation do you wish to change?

Unit 26C and 26B remainder —Moose

Harvest Limit: *Units 26B remainder and 26C—1 moose by Federal registration permit (FM2606) by residents of Kaktovik only. The harvest quota is 3 moose (2 antlered bulls and 1 of either sex) provided that no more than 2 antlered bulls may be harvested from Unit 26C and cows may not be harvested from Unit 26C. You may not take a cow accompanied by a calf. Only 3 Federal registration permits will be issued.*

Federal public lands are closed to the harvest of moose except by a Kaktovik resident holding a Federal registration permit.

Season: *July 1–Mar. 31*

2: How would the new regulation read?

Unit 26C and 26B remainder —Moose

Harvest Limit: *Units 26B remainder and 26C—1 moose by Federal registration permit (FM2606) by residents of Kaktovik only. The harvest quota is ~~3~~ 5 moose (~~2 antlered bulls and 1 of either sex~~ provided that no more than ~~2 antlered bulls~~ may be harvested from Unit 26C and cows may not be harvested from ~~Unit 26C~~. You may not take a cow accompanied by a calf. Only ~~3~~ 5 Federal registration permits will be issued.*

Federal public lands are closed to the harvest of moose except by a Kaktovik resident holding a Federal registration permit.

Season: *July 1–~~Mar. 31~~ June 30 (open all year)*

3: Why should this regulation change be made?

Extension of season: Kaktovik residents note that in recent year's increasingly severe winter weather and storms have prevented hunters from being able to hunt safely in March due to high winds and blizzards. Often in order to reach the area where the moose are requires a long and difficult travel – the time constraint makes it challenging for hunters who have travelled far to find moose, but may run out of time before finding and harvesting a moose before the end of the season. It's very expensive to travel the long distance required to find moose and stressful to harvest moose near the end of the season. The Council concurs that the hunt itself and being alert to the environment, weather changes, and safety takes full awareness and it would be helpful to be able to focus without looking at the calendar and wondering if it is a legal day to hunt when it

nears the end of the harvest season. A season extension would allow hunters the flexibility to hunt when the weather and travel conditions are suitable and safe.

Frequently the community of Kaktovik does not harvest the full three moose permitted per year. A season extension would assist the community in being able to continue to hunt until they are able to get the full subsistence harvest quota currently allowed. The Council feels that the current harvest season time constraint is an unnecessary regulatory burden to the community that interferes with subsistence hunting.

Harvest quota: Kaktovik residents note that it would be helpful for the community to harvest a couple more moose to support additional families. The current harvest quota of only 3 moose is very restrictive and little meat to help support the whole community. The Council requests full consideration of the subsistence needs of the community and an investigation into historic harvest levels prior to any subsistence restrictions being in place. The Council further stressed the importance of documenting traditional knowledge and including it in the analysis. They noted that review of the records in recent years show reduced inclusion of cultural information in the wildlife analysis and emphasized that this needs to be improved upon.

At the December 7, 2012 meeting by teleconference the Council had discussed that a Community Harvest quota approach may better support the needs of the community.

Kaktovik residents note that caribou herds are not often close by the village so they have to travel a very long distance to search for and hunt caribou. A Council member from Barrow noted that they often send caribou meat to Kaktovik to help support family there. The Council concurs it would be helpful to the community to be able to harvest 2 more moose a year – a small number that should not impact the population but would greatly help feed more families and provide a good source of meat that can be shared and provide some diversity in the annual diet.

4: What impact will this change have on wildlife populations?

Extension of season: The season extension would not impact the population as the harvest quota would still be in place.

Harvest quota: The council feels the harvest quota of 3 moose is quite small and an increase to a total harvest of 5 moose per year is still minimal enough to not impact the moose population.

5: How will this change affect subsistence uses?

A season harvest extension will greatly assist the community in being to hunt safely and have the flexibility to hunt when weather and scheduling allows. The extended season will support the community in being able to harvest the full annual moose quota allowed.

Two additional moose harvests per year will help feed more families and support the sharing networks in the community. In addition to a needed food source; moose is also important for its spiritual and cultural aspects of life for Kaktovik residents.

6: How will this change affect other uses, such as sport/recreational and commercial?

No impact – no sport/recreational or commercial harvest is allowed on Federal lands in this unit.

WP14-55

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Please answer the following questions. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

1. What regulation do you wish to change?

Current Location: Units 26B remainder and 26C—Moose

Current Federal Regulations

Units 26B, remainder and 26C—1 moose by Federal registration permit by residents of Kaktovik only. The harvest quota is 3 moose (2 antlered bulls and 1 of either sex,) provided that no more than 2 antlered bulls may be harvested from Unit 26C and cows may not be harvested from Unit 26C. You may not take a cow accompanied by a calf in Unit 26B. Only 3 Federal registration permits will be issued. Federal public lands are closed to the taking of moose except by a Kaktovik resident holding a Federal registration permit and hunting under these regulations.

July 1–Mar. 31

Closure Dates: July 1–Mar. 31

This proposal seeks to rescind the federal closure to non-federally qualified users in the Firth and Mancha River and upper Kongakut river drainages in Unit 26C in to provide for a conservative regulated opportunity as afforded by recently adopted (March 2012) state regulations which reads:

Unit 26C—Moose

*Unit 26(C), that portion in the drainages of Firth River and Mancha Creek and the upper Kongakut River, upstream from and including Drain Creek**

Resident Hunters: 1 bull by Sept. 1–Sept. 25
drawing permit only; up to 30 permits may be issued;

Nonresident hunters: 1 bull with Sept. 1 – Sept. 25

50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side; by drawing permit only; up to 30 permits may be issued;

Unit 26(C) remainder

No open season

2. How should the new regulation read?

Write the regulation the way you would like to see it written.

Units 26B, remainder and 26C—1 moose by Federal registration permit by residents of Kaktovik only. The harvest quota is 3 moose (2 antlered bulls and 1 of either sex,) provided that no more than 2 antlered bulls may be harvested from Unit 26C and cows may not be harvested from Unit 26C. You may not take a cow accompanied by a calf in Unit 26B. Only 3 Federal registration permits will be issued. Federal public lands are closed to the taking of moose except by a Kaktovik resident holding a Federal registration permit and hunting under these regulations **EXCEPT AS PERMITTED UNDER STATE OF ALASKA REGULATIONS 5AAC 92.110 and 5AAC 92.115.**

3. Why should this regulation change be made?

The area is currently closed unnecessarily. Unit 26C state hunting seasons were closed beginning in 1996 in response to a North Slope-wide (Units 26A, 26B, and 26C) moose decline in the early 1990s. Moose seasons were also closed in Unit 26B and substantially restricted in Unit 26A. Gradually, during the 2000s, the North Slope moose population increased beginning in Unit 26A and subsequently in Unit 26B. In Unit 26A, hunting seasons were liberalized during that time and in 2006, resident-only moose hunting seasons were re-opened in Unit 26B. The Unit 26C moose season remained closed to non-federally qualified subsistence users because moose surveys conducted by Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) staff along most drainages of the coastal plain in Unit 26C indicated the moose population had not recovered. During 2003–2009, 5 surveys were conducted, indicating a low and stable moose population ranging from 47–61 moose in northern Unit 26C. However, the upper Kongakut and Firth–Mancha drainages of Unit 26C were not surveyed and these areas historically contained the best moose habitat and the greatest number of moose.

Unit 26 has a positive finding for customary and traditional use of moose. In 2006, the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) was revised from 60–80 moose to 21–48, including 15–30 in Unit 26A.

Currently, a resident hunters-only drawing permit (DM996; up to 30 permits may be issued) and a general season moose hunt (Feb. 15–April 15, up to a 14–day season may be announced by emergency order) occur in Unit 26B. Combined harvest from those hunts averaged 6 bulls annually during 2006–2011. A federal hunt occurs in Unit 26B and Unit 26C by residents of Kaktovik for 3 moose, provided no more than 2 antlered bulls may be harvested from Unit 26C, and no cow moose may be harvested from Unit 26C. This results in a harvest quota of 2 antlered bulls for Unit 26C. Three permits are issued annually and, on average, 1 moose is harvested per year in Unit 26C.

The 2011 moose population estimate for Units 26B and 26C combined is 850–1,000 moose (observable moose=854). In Unit 26B, annual moose surveys conducted by the Department in April during 2003–2011 indicated a stable population between 400–600 moose. As mentioned previously, surveys conducted by ANWR during 2003–2009 indicated approximately 55 moose on the coastal plain in Unit 26C. No ratio data are associated with these surveys because they were conducted in the spring. In fall 2011, the Department conducted a moose survey of the Firth–Mancha and upper Kongakut drainages in

Unit 26C. In the Firth–Mancha, we observed 212 moose (60 bulls:100 cows, 27 calves:100 cows). In the upper Kongakut, we observed 127 moose (90 bulls:100 cows, 38 calves:100 cows). Prior to 2011, the most recent survey of the Firth–Mancha and upper Kongakut drainages was conducted by ANWR staff in 2002 when a total of 132 moose were observed in the Firth–Mancha and 95 moose were observed in the upper Kongakut. The 2011 survey resulted in an increase in observable moose from 227 moose in 2002 to 339 moose in 2011, indicating that there is a harvestable surplus of moose in Unit 26C above the 2 antlered bull harvest quota provided by the federal system for residents of Kaktovik. A 3% harvest rate of 850–1000 moose results in a harvestable surplus of 26–30 moose for Units 26B and 26C. As a result, additional but limited nonsubsistence hunting opportunity is feasible in the Firth–Mancha and upper Kongakut drainages of Unit 26C.

The harvestable surplus for the Firth-Mancha and upper Kongakut is 10 bull moose based on a 3% harvest rate of the 339 moose observed in 2011 in the area.

Closures under the federal program are intended for the purpose of conservation measures under ANILCA 8.15, and not as a measure to unduly impact other users through the restriction of access to resources in perpetuity. The original closure has met its intended effect, and warrants rescinding to recognize its success.

The Alaska Board of Game adopted an amended proposal at its March 2012 meeting to allow limited hunting in this specific area. However, the state moose season would remain closed by federal regulation (except for federally qualified subsistence hunters) and the Department will not issue any drawing permits. The Department intends to request a federal closure review specifically for the Firth–Mancha and upper Kongakut portion of Unit 26C at the next Federal Subsistence Board meeting in 2014. If the federal closure is removed, the Department may issue drawing permits.

Units and Bag Limit	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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Unit 26(C), that portion in the drainages of Firth Creek and Mancha Creek and the upper Kongakut River, upstream from and including Drain Creek

RESIDENT HUNTERS
1 bull by drawing permit only;
up to 30 permits may be issued;

Sept. 1–25

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS
1 bull with 50-inch antlers or

Sept. 1-25

**antlers with 4 or more brow
tines on at least one side; by
drawing permit only; up to 30
permits may be issued;**

Remainder of Unit 26(C)

No Open Season

No Open Season

The Alaska Board of Game adopted this opportunity at their March 2012 meeting with the passage of an amended proposal (174). The State fully recognizes the importance of continued conservation within its desire to restore this opportunity, and has outlined an extremely conservative plan for issuance of drawing permits. While the regulation stipulates up to thirty permits may be issued, the department has developed an extremely conservative structure to dictate how many permits may in fact be issued for a given season which is outlined in the supporting documents attached to this proposal.

Passage of the proposal reinstating this lost opportunity was not contested or opposed by representatives of the federal program at the March 2012 Board of Game meeting.

Please see attachments for additional information.

4. What impact will this change have on wildlife populations?

Harvestable surplus of moose in this area will be made available to those who desire to regain an opportunity to harvest them which was previously available. Changes in the population are expected to be de minimis as use of this resource by other users will be regulated through a highly structured process. Should the area be reopened to other users, federally qualified subsistence users would of course retain preference, and in the event of decline of the population other users would be the first to be restricted or excluded from this opportunity. Historically in the Firth–Mancha and upper Kongakut portion of Unit 26C, an average of 2 hunters hunted per year during 1985-1995.

5. How will this change affect subsistence users?

Federally qualified subsistence users who have relied on this population will continue to harvest moose from this population.

How will this change affect other uses, i.e. sport/recreational and commercial?

Answer questions 7-9 only if you are proposing a change to a customary and traditional use determination.

Other users will regain a highly desired lost opportunity to harvest this previously available resource and be assured that the federal program does not intend for closures to remain in perpetuity once adopted. They may regain confidence that state and federal managers are in fact working together for the benefit of all users and the resource and may refrain from accusations that the process exists simply to limit access.

6. Which communities have used this resource?

Anchorage, Fairbanks, North Pole, Central, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, Utah, Pennsylvania, North Dakota

7. Where has this resource been harvested?

Within the Firth, Mancha, and Upper Kongakut drainages of GMU 26C.

8. In what months has this resource been harvested?

This resource has been harvested in

__September__