NORTH SLOPE
Federal Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council

USFWS

Meeting Materials

February 16, 2010

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NORTH SLOPE SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
North Slope Borough Assembly Room
February 16, 2010; 9:00 a.m.–5 p.m.

DRAFT AGENDA

Public Comments: Public comments are welcome for each agenda item and for regional concerns not included on the agenda. The Council appreciates hearing your concerns and knowledge. Please fill out a comment form to be recognized by the Council chair. Time limits may be set to provide opportunity for all to testify and keep the meeting on schedule.

Please Note: These are estimated times and the agenda is subject to change. Contact staff for the current schedule. Evening sessions are at the call of the chair.

1. **Call to Order** *(Harry Brower, Chair)*
2. **Moment of Silence** *(Harry Brower, Chair)*
3. **Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum** *(Lee Kayotuk, Secretary)* 3
4. **Welcome and Introductions** *(Harry Brower, Chair)*
5. **Review and Adoption of Agenda** *(Add new items under 14)* 1
6. **Review and Adoption of Minutes** *(Harry Brower, Chair)* 4
7. **Election of Officers** *(Barb Atoruk, Coordinator)*
8. **Wildlife Proposal Review and Regional Council Recommendations** *(Harry Brower)*

   Presentation Procedure for Review of Proposals
   1. Introduction of proposal and analysis
   2. Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments
   3. Other Federal, State and Tribal agency comments
   4. Interagency Staff Committee comments
   5. Subsistence Resource Committee comments
   6. Fish and Game Advisory Committee comments
   7. Summary of written public comments
   8. Public testimony
   9. Regional Council deliberation, recommendation, and justification

   A. Statewide Proposals

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   3. WP10-03: Revise Regulations on Cultural/Educational Permits 16
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B. North Slope Proposals

1. WP10-106/107: Revise Harvest Limit and Season for Wolves 43

C. Crossover Proposals

1. WP10-67: Moose 51

9. Review and Approve Draft 2009 Annual Report *(Barb Atoruk)* 66

10. Western Arctic Caribou Herd Representative *(Barb Atoruk)*

11. Next Meeting *(Barb Atoruk)* 68

A. Confirm Date and Place for Fall 2010 meeting

B. Establish Date and Place for Winter 2011 meeting

12. Call for Proposals to Change 2011/13 Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations

13. Agency Reports

A. Office of Subsistence Management

B. National Park Service *(Staff)*

C. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge *(Vince Mathews)*

D. Alaska Department of Fish and Game

E. Bureau of Land Management *(Dave Yokel)*

14. New Business

15. Adjourn

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Special accommodations for persons with disabilities may be arranged by contacting the Regional Coordinator at least 72 *hours* prior to the meeting.

TELECONFERENCING is available upon request. You must call the Office of Subsistence Management, 1-800-478-1456, 786-3888 or 786-3885, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting to receive this service. Please notify the Regional Coordinator which agenda topic interests you and whether you wish to testify regarding it.

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION regarding this agenda or need more information, please call Barb Atoruk, Regional Coordinator, toll free at 1-800-478-1456 or 1-907-786-3885; fax 907-786-3898, Barbara_Atoruk@fws.gov.

Thank you for participating in this public meeting of the North Slope Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. All minutes and information on the Regional Advisory Councils are posted on the Office of Subsistence Management website, http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/home.html.

REGION 10 – NORTH SLOPE SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

SEAT 1	***Harry K. Brower, Jr.***	***Barrow***	***Chair***
2011			
1993			
SEAT 2	***Lee Kayotuk***	***Kaktovik***	***Secretary***
2009			
2006			
SEAT 3	***Ray F. Koonuk, Sr.***	***Point Hope***	
2011			
2008			
SEAT 4	***Lloyd K. Leavitt***	***Barrow***	
2010			
2007			
SEAT 5	***VACANT***		
2009			
2004			
SEAT 6	***Paul S. Bodfish, Sr.***	***Atqasuk***	
2007			
1998			
SEAT 7	***James Nageak***	***Anaktuvuk Pass***	
2011			
2008			
SEAT 8	***Rosemary Ahtaungaruak***	***Nuiqsut***	
SEAT 9	***VACANT***		
SEAT 10	***VACANT***		

NORTH SLOPE SUBSISTENCE COUNCIL MEETING
NSB Assembly Room, BARROW, ALASKA
August 25, 2009, 9:02 a.m. to 4 p.m.

MINUTES

Members Present:
Mr. Harry Brower, Jr., Barrow, Chair
Mr. Gordon Brower, Barrow, Vice Chair
Mr. Ray F. Koonuk, Sr., Point Hope
Mr. David Gunderson, Wainwright
Mr. James Nageak, Anaktuvuk Pass

Unexcused Absence
Mr. Lloyd Leavitt, Barrow

Excused:
Lee Kayotuk, Kaktovik
Paul Bodfish, Sr., Atqasuk

Federal/Agency Personnel

FWS/OSM
Barb Armstrong, Anchorage
Polly Wheeler, Anchorage
Karen Hyer, Anchorage

NPS
None

BLM
Dave Yokel, Fairbanks
Ben Nageak, Barrow

ADF&G
Bonnie Borba, Fairbanks

PUBLIC
Roy Varner, NSB
George Olemaun, NSB, Mayor's office
Terry Tagarook, Wainwright

Court Reporter: Selena Hile

Call to Order

Harry Brower, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 A.M. in Barrow.

Roll Call/Confirmation of Quorum

Roll was called. Quorum was established. Members excused: Lee Kayotuk, Kaktovik; Paul Bodfish, Atqasuk. Members absent: Lloyd Leavitt, Barrow.

Moment of Silence

The Chair asked for a moment of silence.

Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked each to introduce themselves beginning with the Council members.

Review and Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: *Mr. Ray Koonuk, Sr.* ***moved*** *to adopt the agenda. Mr. Nageak seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Review and Adoption of Minutes

MOTION: *Mr. Gordon Brower, Sr.* ***moved*** *to approve the minutes of August 26, 2008 as written. Mr. Ray Koonuk, Sr. seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairman Brower read the 2008 Annual Report reply.

FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM

Ms. Hyer gave a brief overview of the Draft Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan for the region. She explained that three Stock, Status and Trends projects and two Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge projects were recommended by the Technical Review Committee. She noted that the next formal call for this region would be in 2012 and their staff would certainly be willing to help with ideas and maybe contacts for investigators. Information needs can also be submitted early for the next call. She stressed that the proposals need to fall under the Federal jurisdiction and the Federal Program does not manage in marine waters. Ms. Wheeler stated that the baseline harvest monitoring provides key information need. The whole focus is to provide information that can be used for Federal subsistence fisheries management. If there are concerns about subsistence management and they can act on it, they need that information and that is why the baseline Federal Subsistence harvest information is targeted.

The Council took no action on the five Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program projects. The Northern Region includes the Seward Peninsula, Northwest Arctic and North Slope councils. While in the FRMP Northern region, none of the five projects recommended for funding occur in the North Slope region. By taking no action, the Council deferred to the Seward Peninsula and Northwest Arctic RACs, since the projects are in their regions.

Ms. Hyer gave a short report on the marine drive protozoa parasite, *ichthyophonus*, and its effects since 2004. The parasite infects various marine and anadromous fish species including Chinook salmon. It can only live in cold-blooded animals, and cannot infect people. The fish can be eaten by humans without harm but the taste and smell is undesirable.

Mr. Koonuk requested that the Northern Region Councils have a **joint meeting**. The meeting is imminent to discuss together global warming and what other regions of the North are experiencing for the moment such as the climate change, the migration of the fish, different fisheries coming in their areas.

CLOSURE REVIEW AND COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

WCR08-18-Unit 23 Sheep

Council Recommendation: Support retaining closure WC08-18-Unit 23 Sheep based on conservation concerns and to protect the subsistence priority

WCR08-20-Unit 24 Remainder Moose

Council Recommendation: Support retaining closure WCR08-20-Unit 24 Remainder Moose based on conservation concerns and to protect the subsistence priority.

WCR08-25-Unit 26C Musk Ox

Council Recommendation: Support retaining closure WCR08-25-Unit 26C muskox based on conservation concerns and to protect the subsistence priority.

The Council supported retaining the closure based on conservation concerns and to protect the subsistence priority. However, the Council also requested that the North Slope Muskox Working Group (mentioned by Mr. Yokel, BLM) meets to discuss the current strategy for allowing muskox harvest in unit 26. The Council requested that the group meet and review the overall status of muskox from Point Hope to Demarcation. If the population has a harvestable surplus, then that should be divided up between the affected villages.

MIGRATORY BIRD UPDATE

Mr. Doug Alcorn and Mr. Fred Armstrong, Jr. from **Migratory Bird Program** office provided a brief updated summary of the current 2009 regulations on migratory birds on the North Slope. The Migratory Bird Council consists of representatives from Alaska Natives, State of Alaska, and the Federal government who operate as equals. The Migratory Bird Council provides recommendations to the Secretary of Interior for regulations one year in advance. This process is different than any other regulatory scheme in the government system. The North Slope is divided into southern, northern and eastern units. These units are separated by GPS coordinates provided by the North Slope Wildlife Department representative. Each unit has a 30 day closure period when they are nesting. Question and answer period by the Council.

CALL FOR WILDLIFE PROPOSALS

Call for Proposals to Change 2010/12 Federal Subsistence Wildlife Regulations was announced. Proposal period ends November 5, 2009.

AGENCY REPORTS

Ms. Wheeler provided a briefing on the **Revised Schedule/Calendar for Program**. She noted that because we had a snafu in Washington DC, the process for the wildlife regulations will be before the Council at its winter 2010 meeting. Then, their recommendations would be before the Federal Board in May 2010.

She provided a summary for the **Bear Claw Working Group**. The Board of Game set up a working group on the issue of bear claws to work something out so that they couldn't keep submitting proposals or

keep opposing the proposals. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game submitted a proposal asking the Federal Board to refine the Federal regulations, which, in its view, allow for "unconstrained commercial sale of handicrafts made from brown bear parts and create market incentives for poaching and made three specific requests: 1)the removal of all unit-specific regulations concerning the statewide sale of brown bear handicrafts; 2) sale be allowed to anyone of handicrafts made of brown bear skin, hide, pelt or fur, but not claws, from all units; and 3) sales of brown bear handicrafts made of claws, bones, teeth, sinew, or skulls only be allowed between Federally qualified subsistence users. The problem needs to be clearly defined before a solution is made. Based on the State's recommendation, the Board deferred the proposal until the next wildlife cycle in 2009. A tracking mechanism needs to be set and it may be a way to protect subsistence hunters and the crafters can legally sell them. The Council can participate by naming someone to be on the working group or you will be provided updates on what they are doing. Question and answer from the Council was provided.

Ms. Wheeler gave the briefing on the proposed Revisions to Regulations Governing **Special Actions** (50CFR 100.19 and 36 CFR 242.19). The Board responded to the comments made by directing the Office of Subsistence Management and the Solicitor's Office to draft proposed revisions to the section of the regulations which address special actions. Regulations governing special actions are included in subpart B which is where the fish and wildlife subsistence harvest regulations are located. The Council may review the changes to subpart D regulations, the changes to subpart B require Secretarial signatures; however, the Board wanted each Council to be briefed and invited their comments through December 18, 2009. Comments will be considered in the final rule. The final revisions and comments will be presented to the Board on January 2010. The Board will develop a recommendation to Secretary and the; Office of Subsistence management will develop the final rule, which will then be, reviewed by the OSM leadership, the Solicitor's Office, the Interagency Staff Committee and the Special Assistant to the Secretary on Alaska Affairs. The final review and approval will be made by the Secretaries in Washington. The rule will then be published in the Federal Register.

Ms. Wheeler presented the **Memorandum of Understanding** on page 77 of the meeting booklet. This memorandum of understanding between the Federal Subsistence Management Agencies and the State was signed on December 2008. This need for coordination is a requirement in the Alaska Nation Interests Lands Conservation Act, a number of different sections in there. The MOU is self explanatory.

Ms. Wheeler gave a short briefing on **compensation** for Council members; she referenced the Council to page 84 of their meeting book. It is self explanatory and status quo.

Ms. Wheeler informed the Council that our agency recognizes that **climate change** is affecting everybody and they are struggling as an agency to try and figure out what the Federal Subsistence Program can do about it. There may be topics on their agendas in the future to brainstorm with them on what kinds of concerns they have on the changes of climate in their respective regions.

Ms. Barb Armstrong spoke on behalf of **National Park Service** to ask the Council to appoint a member from the Council to the Gates Subsistence Resource Commission.

Mr. Gordon Brower moved to nominate James Nageak to represent them in the Gates Subsistence Resource Commission. The Chair asked for a unanimous consent, no objections. Mr. Nageak will represent the Council.

Mr. Dave Yokel from **Bureau of Land Management** gave a short report about some actions that BLM has permitted over the last winter that have potential to influence subsistence harvest in the NPR-A. Anadarko drilled the Wolf Creek No. 4 well last winter. ConocoPhillips drilled two wells in the NPR-A

this past winter. Neither of these companies have plans to drill in the NPR-A for the coming winter of ’09 and ’10. BLM continues to work cooperatively with the North Slope Borough and the State Department of Fish and Game on a monitoring program for the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd. He stated that this has been a very successful cooperative effort over the years. They are starting to build a really good strong database of the movements and distribution on this caribou herd.

Ms. Bonnie Borba from **Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries of Fairbanks** gave a brief update overview of an assessment of Pacific salmon resources up in the Arctic region. The Commercial Fisheries, Habitat and Subsistence are working together with the North Slope Borough looking at salmon resources moving into the area. They mainly have documented species across the range of rivers to provide information on distribution and abundance of salmon and this would help determine which rivers could be used as index areas for future monitoring. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) will be an important component in this project and this will be used to determine if salmon are becoming more prevalent in the face of global warming. They are collecting just baseline data for now.

Ms. Barb Armstrong, the coordinator reviewed the concerns that the Council mentioned for their **2009 Annual Report**: muskox, moose, sheep, brown bear, questions to Migratory Bird Program, Submitting fish studies proposals for North Slope.

Mr. Koonuk made a request to attend the Northwest Arctic Council meeting since they also hunt, gather and fish within their boundaries and they needed to be updated. Ms. Polly Wheeler, DARD, granted his request.

ESTABLISHED TIMES AND PLACES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The winter meeting will be in Barrow on February 16 and 17, 2010
The fall meeting will be in Barrow on August 25, 2010.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Harry Brower, Jr., the Chair called the meeting to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted:

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

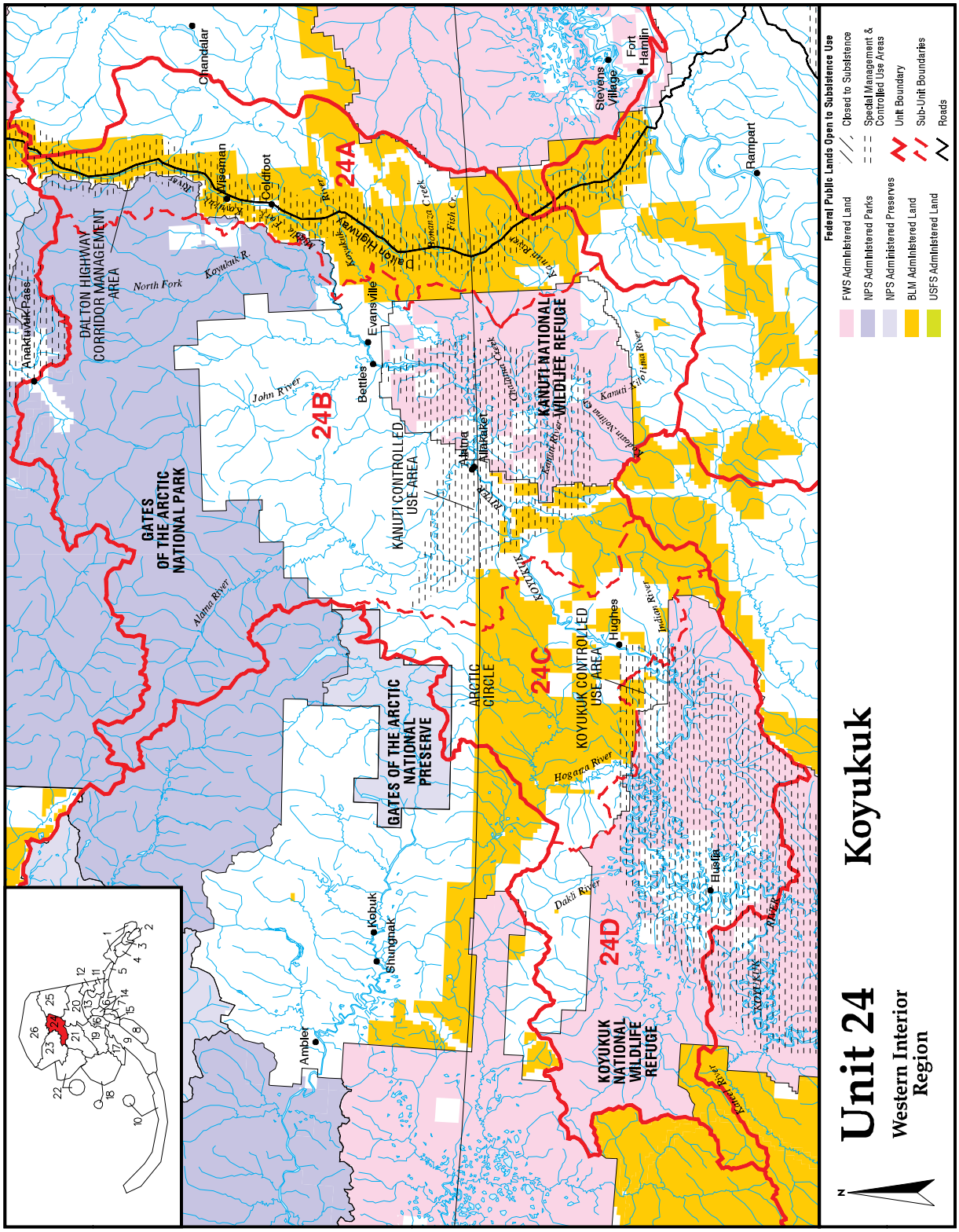
_____/S/_____ November 27, 2009
Barbara M. Atoruk, DFO Date
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

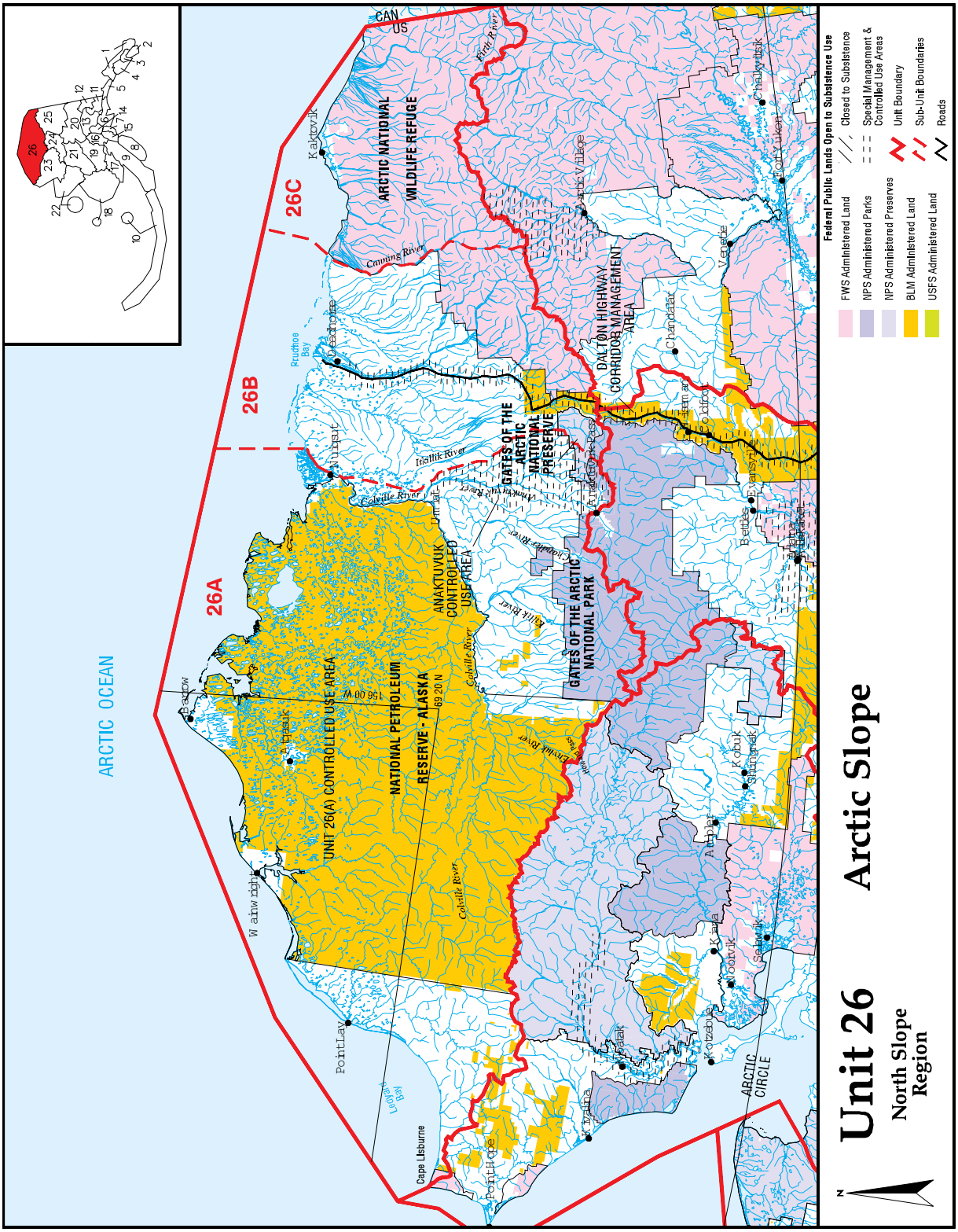
_____/S/_____ November 27, 2009
Harry K. Brower, Jr., Chair Date

North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Regional Advisory Council at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

For a more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript are available upon request. Call Barbara Armstrong at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3885.


Unit 24
Koyukuk
Western Interior Region
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
FWS Administered Land
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
BLM Administered Land
USFS Administered Land
Closed to Subsistence
Special Management & Controlled Use Areas
Unit Boundary
Sub-Unit Boundaries
Roads
24A
24B
24C
24D
GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK
GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PRESERVE
DALTON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT AREA
KANUTI CONTROLLED USE AREA
KANUTI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
KOYUKUK CONTROLLED USE AREA
KOYUKUK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
ARCTIC CIRCLE
Anaktuvuk Pass
Chandalar
Kiseman
Coldfoot
Evansville
Bettles
Allakaket
Alatna
Hughes
Huslia
Stevens Village
Fort Hamlin
Rampart
Kobuk
Shungnak
Ambler
Dalton Highway
Koyukuk R.
North Fork
John River
Alatna River
Kanuti River
Hogatza River
Dakli River
Koyukuk River
Kanuti River
Indian River
Hogatza River
Kanuti River
Kanuti River
Kanuti


Unit 26
North Slope Region
Arctic Slope
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
FWS Administered Land
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
BLM Administered Land
USFS Administered Land
Closed to Subsistence
Special Management & Controlled Use Areas
Unit Boundary
Sub-Unit Boundaries
Roads
ARCTIC OCEAN
26A
26B
26C
ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PRESERVE
GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK
DALTON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT AREA
ANAKTUVUK CONTROLLED USE AREA
UNIT 26(A) CONTROLLED USE AREA
NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE - ALASKA
ARCTIC CIRCLE
Cape Lisburne
Ledyard Bay
Colville River
Itkillik River
Canning River
Firth River
Kaktovik
Deadhorse
Nuiqsut
Umiat
Anaktuvuk Pass
Chandalar
Venetie
Fort Yukon
Chalkyitsik
Bettles
Evansville
Kobuk
Shungnak
Kiana
Noorvik
Selawik
Kotzebue
Noatak
Kivalina
Point Hope
Point Lay
Wainwright
Barrow
Atqasuk
Ambler
156 00 W
69 20 N
CAN
US

WP10-01 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP10-01 requests the addition of a definition for "drawing permit" to the Federal subsistence management regulations. *Submitted by the USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management*
Proposed Regulation	*Statewide-General Regulations* *§__.25(a) Definitions* ***Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of Federally qualified subsistence users selected by means of a lottery held for all Federally qualified subsistence users submitting valid applications for such permits and who agree to abide by the conditions specified for each hunt. Drawing permits are issued based on priorities determined by 36 CFR 242.17 and 50 CFR 100.17.***
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support** Proposal WP10-01 **with modification** to simplify and clarify the definition. The modified regulation would read: *Statewide-General Regulations* *§__.25(a) Definitions* ***Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of Federally qualified subsistence users selected by means of a random drawing.***
Southeast Regional Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Regional Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Regional Council Recommendation	
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Regional Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Regional Council Recommendation	
Eastern Interior Regional Council Recommendation	

continued on next page

WP10-01 Executive Summary *(continued)*	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP10-01

ISSUES

Proposal WP10-01, submitted by the USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, requests the addition of a definition for "drawing permit" to the Federal subsistence management regulations.

DISCUSSION

Existing Federal subsistence management regulations do not include a definition for "drawing permit"(§§__.4 and __.25(a)). However, because this term is used in the hunting regulations (§__.26(n)(19)), a definition should be provided.

Existing Federal Regulation

Statewide-General Regulations

§__.25(a) Definitions—No existing definition

Proposed Federal Regulation

Statewide-General Regulations

§__.25(a) Definitions
Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of Federally qualified subsistence users selected by means of a lottery held for all Federally qualified subsistence users submitting valid applications for such permits and who agree to abide by the conditions specified for each hunt. Drawing permits are issued based on priorities determined by 36 CFR 242.17 and 50 CFR 100.17.

Existing State Regulation

Definitions

Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of people selected by means of a lottery held for all people submitting valid applications for such permits and who agree to abide by the conditions specified for each hunt.

Extent of Federal Public Lands/Waters

This proposal would apply to the entire state. Federal public lands comprise approximately 65% of Alaska and consist of 23% Bureau of Land Management, 15% National Park Service, 21% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and 6% U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service lands.

Effects of the Proposal

The addition of this definition does not affect fish and wildlife populations, subsistence uses or other uses (i.e., sport/recreational or commercial). The Federal Subsistence Management Program has used drawings as one way to distribute permits among residents of a community that are similarly situated relative to

customary and traditional uses of those wildlife populations. Current hunting regulations use the phrase "drawing permit" to describe the permit for the Unit 19A moose hunt, and there have been other situations where drawings have been used to distribute registration permits among qualified applicants. Proposal WP10-09, submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requests a drawing permit hunt. The addition of a definition for "drawing permit" to the Federal regulations would help provide clarity to regulations.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP10-01 **with modification** to simplify and clarify the definition.

The modified regulation would read:

> *Statewide-General Regulations*
>
> *§__.25(a) Definitions*
> ***Drawing permit—a permit issued to a limited number of Federally qualified subsistence users selected by means of a random drawing.***

Justification

The definition clarifies a term that is used in the Federal subsistence hunting regulations and does not affect fish and wildlife populations, subsistence uses or other uses. The modified wording simplifies the definition and makes it clear that drawing permits are based on a "random" drawing for all similarly situated Federally qualified subsistence users.

STATUS OF WP10-02 *(DEFERRED WP08-05)*

Proposal WP10-02 (deferred proposal WP08-05), submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, requested clarification of the existing Federal Subsistence management regulation governing the use of brown bear claws in handicrafts for sale. The proposal specifically asked for the removal of all unit-specific regulations related to the statewide sale of brown bear handicrafts made of skin, hide, pelt or fur and that sales of brown bear handicrafts made of claws, bones, teeth, sinew, or skulls should occur only between Federally qualified subsistence users.

Proposal WP10-02 was deferred by the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) at its May 2008 meeting at the suggestion of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, pending formation of a workgroup to address the issue of developing a method of tracking brown bear claws made into handicrafts for sale. The Board voted unanimously to defer the proposal "to allow a work group to address this issue of sale and tracking, specifically whether or not it's even feasible" (FSB 2008:117). The Board directed that the working group include representatives from all interested Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) and State and Federal staff (FSB 2008: 102-119).

An initial scoping meeting between Federal and State staff was held in January 2009; at that meeting a draft charge was developed[1]. A briefing was provided to all Councils during the Winter 2009 meeting cycle on the status of the workgroup, and Councils selected representatives to participate in the workgroup. The workgroup, including representatives from nine Councils, and Federal and State staff met in June 2009. At that meeting, participants from the Councils posed a number of questions directed at whether or not bear claw tracking is a problem for subsistence users, and if regulations needed to be changed. These questions prompted Federal and State staff to conduct further research, and to meet as agency staff to compare notes and to follow up on research questions, which they did twice during summer 2009. The work group attempted to meet again during the summer of 2009, but this was not possible. In the interim, another briefing on the status of the workgroup was provided to the Councils at the Fall 2009 meetings.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The workgroup, including Council members, will meet during spring/summer 2010 to address the questions raised at its first meeting, and to begin working towards resolution of the issues. This will provide ample time for the workgroups' findings to be presented to each Council for their recommendations during the Fall 2010 meeting cycle, and for a full report to be provided to the Federal Subsistence Board for action at its January 2011 meeting. A report will also be provided to the Alaska Board of Game at an appropriate meeting. Proposal 10-02 (WP08-05) will be deferred until that time.

LITERATURE CITED

FSB. 2008. Transcripts of the Federal Subsistence Board proceedings, April 29, 2008. Office of Subsistence Management, FWS. Anchorage, AK.

[1] Draft charge for workgroup:
Develop a method(s) to recommend to the Federal Subsistence Board and Board of Game for tracking brown bear claws made into handicrafts that is enforceable and culturally sensitive, commensurate with the need to provide conservation of this wildlife resource.

WP10-03 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP10-03 requests the addition of a general provision in Federal subsistence management regulations to allow the harvest of fish and wildlife by participants in a cultural or educational program. *Submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management*
Proposed Regulation	*See the analysis for the proposed regulation language.*
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support** Proposal WP10-03 **with modification** to simplify the proposed regulation.
Southeast Regional Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Regional Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Regional Council Recommendation	
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Regional Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Regional Council Recommendation	
Eastern Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP10-03

ISSUES

Proposal WP10-03, submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management, requests the addition of a general provision in Federal subsistence management regulations to allow the harvest of fish and wildlife by participants in a cultural or educational program.

DISCUSSION

This proposal is a housekeeping measure intended to provide clarity in the guidelines for issuing permits for the harvest of fish and wildlife by cultural and educational programs. Doing so will help to inform the public, fish and wildlife managers, Office of Subsistence Management staff, members of the Interagency Staff Committee, and members of the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) of the guidelines currently in use by Office of Subsistence Management staff with regard to permits to harvest wildlife and fish for cultural and educational programs. Since the Federal program began in 1990, the process for issuing permits has gone through a number of changes. Because some of these changes have not been well documented, there is some confusion over the process. The intent of this regulation then is to provide clarity in Federal subsistence management regulations.

Currently, there is no specific provision allowing for the harvest of wildlife for cultural and educational programs although there is a general allowance that provides for such a practice. A specific provision allows for the harvest of fish for a cultural and educational program.

Most requests speaking to the allowance of fish or wildlife harvests on behalf of a cultural or educational program are on behalf of culture camps sponsored by Native nonprofit organizations. Requests for permits also have been received from a substance abuse rehabilitation program and for college courses. The permits are typically requested both to teach cultural and educational activities associated with harvest, and to provide food for participants in the cultural and educational program. Once a program has been approved for a permit, follow-up requests (referred to as repeat requests in the regulation), may be made annually for up to five years by the same cultural or educational program to harvest the same animal species and amount.

Existing Federal Regulation

Program structure

§____.10(d)

(5) The Board may implement one or more of the following harvest and harvest reporting or permit systems:

(iii) The fish and wildlife is taken by individuals or community representatives permitted (via a Federal Subsistence Registration Permit) a one-time or annual harvest for special purposes including ceremonies and potlatches.

General regulations

No existing regulation

Fish regulations

§____.27(e)

(2) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management may issue a permit to harvest fish for a qualifying cultural/educational program to an organization that has been granted a Federal subsistence permit for a similar event within the previous 5 years. A qualifying program must have instructors, enrolled students, minimum attendance requirements, and standards for successful completion of the course. Applications must be submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest. Permits will be issued for no more than 25 fish per culture/education camp. Appeal of a rejected request can be made to the Federal Subsistence Board. Application for an initial permit for a qualifying cultural/ educational program, for a permit when the circumstances have changed significantly, when no permit has been issued within the previous 5 years, or when there is a request for harvest in excess of that provided in this paragraph (e)(2), will be considered by the Federal Subsistence Board.

Proposed Federal Regulation

Program structure

§____.10(d)

(5) The Board may implement one or more of the following harvest and harvest reporting or permit systems:

(iii) The fish and wildlife is taken by individuals or community representatives permitted (via a Federal Subsistence Registration Permit) a one-time or annual harvest for special purposes including ceremonies and potlatches.

General regulations

§____.25(g) Cultural/educational program permits

(1) A qualifying program must have instructors, enrolled students, minimum attendance requirements, and standards for successful completion of the course. Applications must be submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board through the Office of Subsistence Management 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest. Generally permits will be issued for no more than one large mammal per cultural/educational program, permits will be issued for no more than 25 fish per cultural/educational program, and permits for the harvest of shellfish will be addressed on a case by case basis. Any animals harvested will count against any established Federal harvest quota for the area in which harvested.

(2) Application for an initial permit for a qualifying cultural/educational program, for a permit when the circumstances have changed significantly, when no permit has been issued within the previous 5 years, or when there is a request for harvest in excess of that provided in paragraph

(g)(1), will be considered by the Federal Subsistence Board. Appeal of a rejected request can be made to the Federal Subsistence Board.

(3) A permit to harvest fish, wildlife, or shellfish for a qualifying cultural/educational program which has been granted a Federal subsistence permit for a similar event within the previous 5 years may be issued by the Federal in-season manager (for fisheries) or the Federal local land manager (for wildlife). Requests for follow-up permits must be submitted to the in-season or local land manager 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest.

(4) Federal in-season and local land managers will report the re-issue of any cultural/ educational program permits and the harvest results to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management.

Fish regulations

§____.27(e)

~~*(2) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Subsistence Management may issue a permit to harvest fish for a qualifying cultural/educational program to an organization that has been granted a Federal subsistence permit for a similar event within the previous 5 years. A qualifying program must have instructors, enrolled students, minimum attendance requirements, and standards for successful completion of the course. Applications must be submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest. Permits will be issued for no more than 25 fish per culture/education camp. Appeal of a rejected request can be made to the Federal Subsistence Board. Application for an initial permit for a qualifying cultural/ educational program, for a permit when the circumstances have changed significantly, when no permit has been issued within the previous 5 years, or when there is a request for harvest in excess of that provided in this paragraph (e)(2), will be considered by the Federal Subsistence Board.*~~

State Regulations

5 AAC 92.034 Permit to take game for cultural purposes

The commissioner may issue a permit for the taking of game for the teaching and preservation of historic or traditional Alaskan cultural practices, knowledge, and values, only under the terms of a permit issued by the department upon application. A permit may not be issued if the taking of the game can be reasonably accommodated under existing regulations. For purposes of this section, "game" includes (1) deer; (2) moose; (3) caribou; (4) black bear; (5) mountain goat; (6) small game; (7) furbearers; and (8) any migratory bird for which a federal permit has been issued.

Regulatory History

At the inception of the Federal Subsistence Management Program, all requests for permits to allow harvests for special purposes between regulatory cycles were treated as special actions that went directly to the Board. In 2000, the Board adopted a general provision in Federal regulations that delegated authority to Office of Subsistence Management to issue special harvest permits for repeated requests from

cultural and educational camp operators (§____.25(c)(4) [1]; 66 FR 10148, February 13, 2001). Thus, the initial request went to the Board and any subsequent requests to the Office of Subsistence Management. This regulation included provisions for issuing permits to harvest up to 25 fish and one species of wildlife (deer, moose, caribou, black bear, or mountain goat only). These species were included in the regulation because permits had previously been distributed for these species. At the time of its adoption, the Board expressed the desire to evaluate the effectiveness of the regulation following its implementation (FWS 2004).

Concurrently, in 2000 the Board also adopted regulations to manage fisheries occurring in Federal public waters. As part of this activity, the Board adopted a regulation addressing the subsistence take of fish on behalf of cultural and educational programs (§____.27(e)(2); 66 FR 33745, June 25, 2001). The regulation adopted by the Board required that initial requests are considered by the Board and repeat requests are considered by Office of Subsistence Management. The Board gave the Office of Subsistence Management the authority to issue repeat permits for the harvest of up to 25 fish per program. It should be noted that this regulation was adopted even though a similar regulation (described in the previous paragraph) already existed in general provisions of Federal regulations, which was probably an oversight.

In November 2003 the Board rescinded the general provisions regulation that delegated authority to the Office of Subsistence Management to issue cultural and educational permits (§____.25(g) [§____.25(c)(4)]; 69 FR 40177, July 1, 2004). Instead of a regulation, the Board established guidelines for issuing permits for the harvest fish and wildlife for cultural and educational programs. Additionally, the Board delegated the authority to issue repeat permits to field managers.

When a permit to harvest wildlife by a cultural or educational program is issued, at the same time a letter containing guidelines for delegation is completed by the analyst at the Office of Subsistence Management and sent to the Federal field manager by the policy coordinator at the Office of Subsistence Management. The guidelines require that the field manager become familiar with the management history of the species and with the State and Federal regulations and management plan, and be up-to-date on population and harvest status information. Also, the guidelines direct the field manager to consult with the local ADF&G fish and wildlife managers.

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, the provision in fish regulations for issuing cultural and educational permits should be rescinded. The description of how to apply for a permit to harvest fish or wildlife as part of a cultural or educational program that is in the Federal subsistence regulation booklets published for the public will flow directly from the new regulation requested in this proposal.

If this proposal is not adopted, there will continue to be confusion among the public, fish and wildlife managers, Office of Subsistence Management staff, members of the Interagency Staff Committee, and members of the Federal Subsistence Board concerning the issuing of these permits.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP10-03 **with modification** to simplify the proposed regulation.

1 The regulation located at §____.25(c)(4) in Federal regulations was later moved to §____.25(g) during a reorganization of the Federal regulations (66 FR 33745–33746, June 25, 2001).

The modified regulation should read:

General regulations

§____.25(g) Cultural/educational program permits

(1) A qualifying program must have instructors, enrolled students, minimum attendance requirements, and standards for successful completion of the course. Applications must be submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board through the Office of Subsistence Management and should be submitted 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest. Harvests must be reported and any animals harvested will count against any established Federal harvest quota for the area in which it is harvested.

(2) Requests for follow-up permits must be submitted to the in-season or local manager and should be submitted 60 days prior to the earliest desired date of harvest.

Justification

The harvest of fish and wildlife by participants in cultural and educational programs is generally allowed in the Federal Subsistence Management Program regulations. Proposal WP10-03 will further clarify for fish and wildlife managers, Office of Subsistence Management staff, members of the Interagency Staff Committee, and members of the Federal Subsistence Board the cultural and educational permit regulations.

LITERATURE CITED

FWS. 2004. Staff analysis for Proposal WP04-26. Pages 178–188 in Federal Subsistence Board Meeting Materials May 18–21, 2004. Office of Subsistence Management, FWS. Anchorage, AK. 622 pages.

WP10-04 Executive Summary	
General Description	This proposal would remove Units 6, 12, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D and 20E from the areas for which the Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management has the delegated authority to open, close or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits. *Submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management*
Proposed Regulation	*§__.26 (f)(3)* *The Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, FWS, is authorized to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx in Units ~~6,~~ 7, 11, ~~12~~, 13, 14, 15, **and** 16, ~~20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E,~~ with a maximum season of November 1–February 28. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the ADF&G Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action, consultation with the appropriate Regional Council Chairs, and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.*
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support** proposal WP10-04 **with modification** to delete the regulatory language found in *§__.26 (f)(3),* and delegate the authority to open, close, or adjust Federal lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx via a delegation of authority letter only.
Southeast Regional Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Regional Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Regional Council Recommendation	
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Regional Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Regional Council Recommendation	

continued on next page

WP10-04 Executive Summary (continued)	
Eastern Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP10-04

ISSUE

This proposal , submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management, would remove Units 6, 12, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D and 20E from the areas for which the Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management has the delegated authority to open, close or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits.

DISCUSSION

Lynx trapping seasons are adjusted annually based on recommendations determined using Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Tracking Harvest Strategy for managing lynx (FSB 2001). The Alaska Board of Game removed Units 6, 12, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D and 20E from the list of units that are managed using the lynx harvest strategy. Based on this action these units should also be eliminated from regulation.

Existing Federal Regulation

§__.26 (f)(3)

The Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, FWS, is authorized to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx in Units 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E, with a maximum season of November 1–February 28. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the ADF&G Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action, consultation with the appropriate Regional Council Chairs, and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.

Proposed Federal Regulation

§__.26 (f)(3)

*The Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, FWS, is authorized to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx in Units ~~6,~~ 7, 11, ~~12~~, 13, 14, 15, **and** 16, ~~20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E,~~ with a maximum season of November 1–February 28. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the ADF&G Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action, consultation with the appropriate Regional Council Chairs, and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.*

Regulatory History

In 1987, ADF&G adopted a Tracking Harvest Strategy for managing lynx (ADF&G 1987). This strategy calls for shortening or closing trapping seasons when lynx numbers are low, and lengthening or opening seasons when lynx are abundant. In the spring of 1992, the Alaska Board of Game adopted

maximum possible seasons for a number of management units within the State. Authority to make season adjustments within seasonal windows was delegated to ADF&G by the Alaska Board of Game. The decision to adjust the season is based upon the reported number of lynx harvested and the percentage of kittens within the total harvest.

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) endorsed the State's strategy for setting seasons on lynx and has regularly made annual adjustments to the Federal seasons to align with the State seasons. In 2001 the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB 2001) added a statewide regulatory provision and issued a Delegation of Authority Letter (**Appendix I**) so that the Office of Subsistence Management could adjust lynx trapping regulations through the use of the ADF&G tracking harvest strategy. This delegated authority requires coordination with ADF&G, consultation with the appropriate Federal land management agencies, and development of a staff analysis to evaluate the effects of the changes to the season and harvest limit and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.

In March 2008, the Alaska Board of Game eliminated the lynx tracking strategy in the interior game management units and established permanent seasons for Unit 20. Unit 12 was previously removed from the tracking strategy and in March 2009 the Alaska Board of Game eliminated the tracking strategy for Unit 6.

Effects of the Proposal

When the Board first delegated its authority to the Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, Units 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E were managed by the State using the lynx strategy. Over time, however, the State has removed a number of units from its lynx tracking strategy. If this proposal is adopted it would align Federal and State regulations regarding lynx management.

There should be no impacts on wildlife populations as season and harvest limits can still be changed through the normal regulatory cycle or through special action if needed. There will be no adverse impacts to subsistence users as season and harvest limits may still be changed. This proposed change only addresses the authority delegated to the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support proposal WP10-04 **with modification** to delete the regulatory language found in *§__.26 (f)(3),* and delegate the authority to open, close, or adjust Federal lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx via a delegation of authority letter only (**Appendix II**).

The regulation would be deleted:

> *§__.26 (f)(3) [Reserved]*
>
> ~~*The Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence Management, FWS, is authorized to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx in Units 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20A, 20B, 20C east of the Teklanika River, 20D, and 20E, with a maximum season of November 1–February 28. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the ADF&G Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action, consultation with the appropriate Regional Council Chairs, and Interagency Staff Committee concurrence.*~~

Justification

There should be no impacts on wildlife populations as season and harvest limits can still be changed via the normal regulatory cycle or via special action if needed. There will be no impacts to subsistence users as season and harvest limits may still be changed. This proposed change is only addressing the authority delegated to the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management. The current delegation is already done through a letter and the regulatory language in §__.26 (f)(3) is redundant and not needed. The draft letter found in **Appendix II** would update the delegation of authority letter making it more consistent with other delegation letters issued throughout the state by the Board.

LITERATURE CITED

ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation. 1987. Report to the Board of Game on lynx management. 30 pages.

ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation. 2009. Recommendations for the 2008–2009 lynx trapping seasons: Interior Alaska Tracking Harvest Strategy. 2 pages.

FSB. 2001. Transcripts of the Federal Subsistence Board proceedings, May 9, 2001. Anchorage, AK.

Federal Subsistence Board

3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

FOREST SERVICE

JUN 15 2001

FWS/OSM/C:/LynxDelegation

Mr. Thomas H. Boyd
Assistant Regional Director, Subsistence Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Boyd:

This letter delegates regulatory authority from the Federal Subsistence Board to you as Project Leader of the Office of Subsistence Management to issue special actions when necessary to assure the conservation of healthy lynx populations and to provide for subsistence uses of lynx, consistent with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, on Federal lands subject to ANILCA Title VIII.

Overview

It is the intent of the Federal Subsistence Board that lynx management by Federal officials be coordinated with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and involve Regional Advisory Council representatives to conserve healthy lynx populations while providing for subsistence uses. Federal managers are expected to cooperate with State managers and minimize disruption to resource users and existing agency programs, as agreed to under the Interim Memorandum of Agreement for Coordinated Fisheries and Wildlife Management for Subsistence Uses on Federal Public lands in Alaska.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

1. Delegation: The Project Leader of the Office of Subsistence Management is hereby delegated authority to approve special actions affecting lynx on Federal lands as outlined under **2. Scope of Delegation**.

2. Scope of Delegation: The regulatory authority hereby delegated is limited to authority to open, close, or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, and only after staff analysis of the potential action and Staff Committee concurrence.

Mr. Thomas H. Boyd 2

All other proposed changes to codified regulations, such as customary and traditional use determinations or adjustments to method or means of take, shall be directed to the Federal Subsistence Board.

The Federal lands subject to this delegated authority are those described in the Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska. You will coordinate your decisions with all affected Federal land managers and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

3. Effective Period: This delegation of authority is effective from the date of this letter, and continues until revoked by the Federal Subsistence Board.

4. Guidelines for Delegation: You will review special action requests or situations that may require a special action and all supporting information to determine (1) if the request/situation falls within the scope of delegation, (2) if the action would be consistent with the conservation of healthy lynx populations, and (3) what the consequences of taking an action may be on potentially affected subsistence users and non-subsistence users. You will consider the management history of lynx in the affected region, current State and Federal lynx regulations and management plans, and lynx population and harvest status information. Requests not within your delegated authority will be forwarded to the Federal Subsistence Board for consideration. You will keep a record of all special action requests and their disposition.

You will immediately notify the Federal Subsistence Board and notify/consult with appropriate ADF&G managers, Regional Advisory Council members, and other affected Federal conservation unit managers concerning special actions being considered. You will issue timely decisions. Users, affected State and Federal managers, law enforcement personnel, and Regional Advisory Council representatives will be notified before the effective date/time of decisions.

5. Support Services: Administrative support for management activities will be provided by the Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

6. Authority: This delegation of authority is established pursuant to 36 CFR 242.10(d)(6) and 50 CFR 100.10(d)(6).

This delegation of authority will assure conservation of lynx populations through sound management decisions in cooperation with State managers, thereby providing for the long-term needs of the subsistence user.

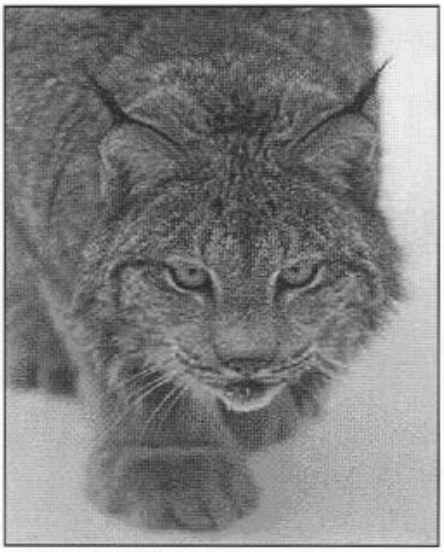
Sincerely,

Mitch Demientieff, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

Attachment: Tracking Harvest Strategy for Lynx
cc: Members of the Federal Subsistence Board
Mr. Stanley Pruszenski, Assistant Regional Director - Law Enforcement
Mr. Walter Soroka, Deputy Assistant Regional Director - Law Enforcement
Mr. Frank Rue, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

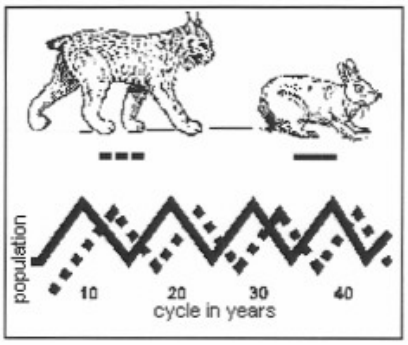
Tracking Harvest Strategy for Lynx

by Howard Golden
Furbearer Biologist, Southcentral Region



Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) populations in Alaska and much of Canada fluctuate greatly over a 9-11-year period, responding mainly to the abundance of snowshoe hares (*Lepus americanus*). Lynx population trends are closely tied with those of snowshoe hares even when other prey is available. Lynx respond directly to changes in hare abundance through the number of kittens that are produced and the survival of kittens and adults. This response by lynx follows the hare population cycles, which are remarkably synchronous in northern latitudes.

Managers of lynx harvest in these areas must be able to respond with appropriate harvest regulations to ensure sustainable harvests are maintained. A tracking harvest strategy is one method for managing the harvest of populations in a fluctuating environment. Under a tracking harvest strategy, harvest is increased while a population is growing and is decreased during a population decline. In 1987, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Board of Game (BOG), which authorizes seasons and bag limits in Alaska, adopted a tracking harvest strategy to allow the dynamic management of lynx based on the ability of populations to support harvest. This was in response to concerns by lynx managers that high lynx-pelt prices would encourage excessive harvest during the declining phase of the lynx cycle.



The tracking harvest strategy applies to the road-connected areas of Interior and Southcentral Alaska that have high trapper use. Several criteria are used to determine if lynx seasons should be changed, including:

1. Percent kittens in the harvest
2. Evidence of increasing or decreasing populations of both lynx and hares
3. Period of pelt primeness
4. Potential negative effects of early seasons' orphaning kittens too young to survive
5. Possible effects of late seasons on higher harvests due to increased movement and greater vulnerability of lynx

The tracking harvest strategy for lynx was implemented in 1988. The strategy resulted in season closures in some units when lynx populations seemed to be at low levels but later allowed seasons in those units to reopen once lynx populations began to increase. The tracking harvest strategy became difficult to use because of the need to issue emergency orders to change seasons outside the usual regulatory schedule established by the BOG. This problem was resolved in 1992 when the BOG authorized ADF&G to

change season lengths within the broad seasons of 1 November-28 February in Interior game management units and 10 November-28 February in Southcentral units. ADF&G is not authorized to modify bag limits under this plan because that is a BOG allocation prerogative. There is a no-limit bag for lynx trapping throughout most of the state.

Every spring ADF&G biologists analyze data collected over winter during the trapping season to determine the most appropriate lynx seasons for the next winter. Biologists use a variety of tools to make their decisions. These tools include:

Tracking harvest strategy area (shaded) and Game Management Unit boundaries in Alaska.

1. Track counts in snow to monitor the relative abundance of lynx and snowshoe hares
2. Pelt measurements to estimate the proportion of kittens in the harvest
3. Biological measurements from lynx carcasses purchased from trappers
4. Harvest data to determine where and how many lynx were trapped
5. Reports from trappers to get their on-the-ground observations
6. Other things like weather and snow conditions and pelt prices

The new seasons may be long during the high years in a population cycle, closed during a low period, or somewhere in between during the middle years.

LynxTrak: A Tool for Lynx Harvest Managers

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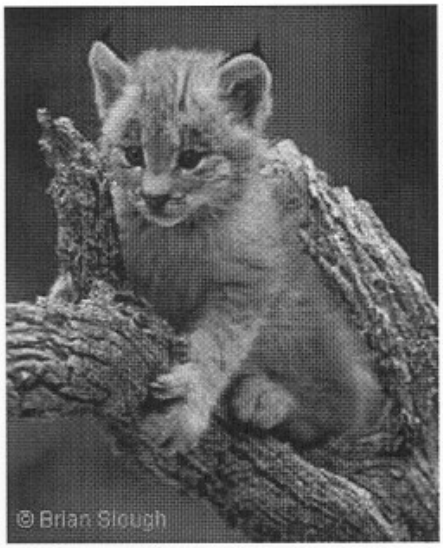
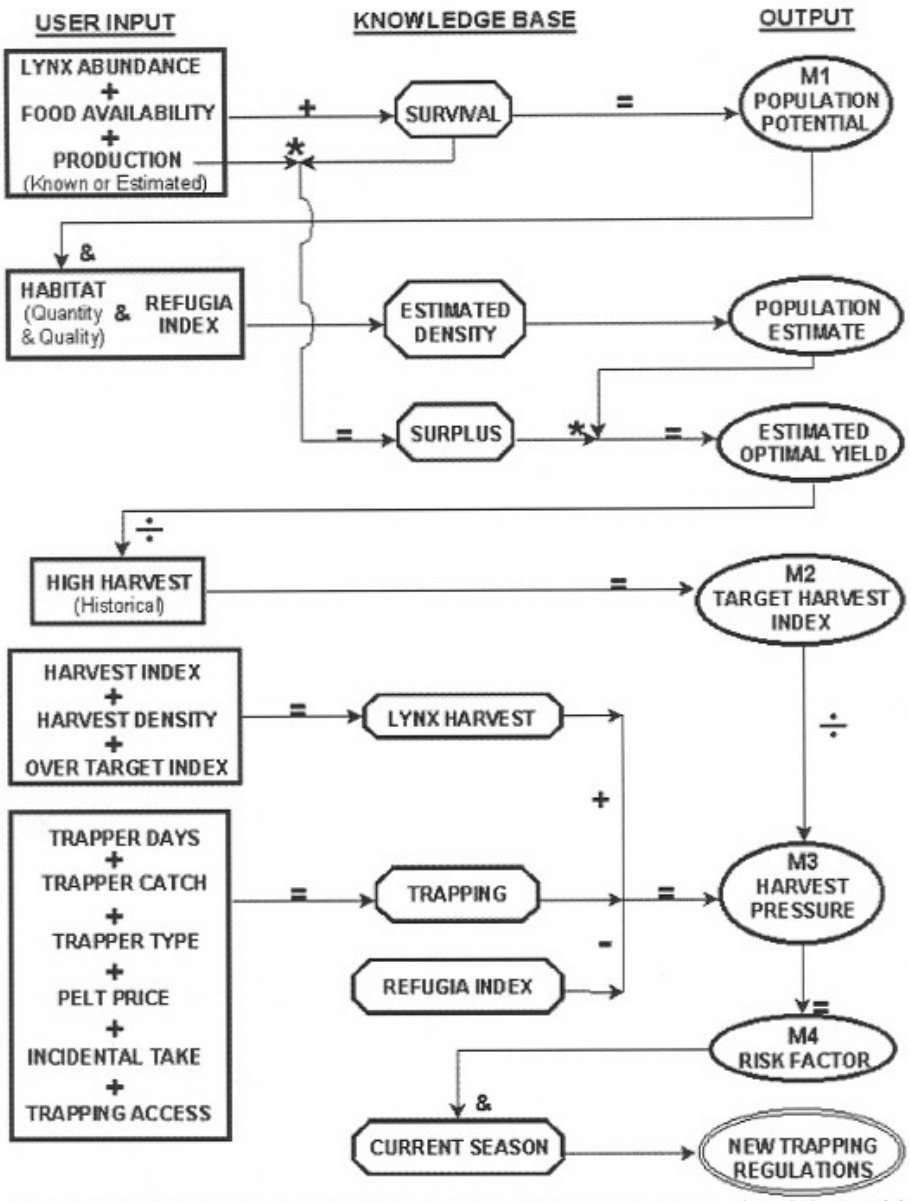
LynxTrak: A Tool for Lynx Harvest Managers

by Howard Golden
Furbearer Biologist, Southcentral Region



To aid lynx managers achieve sustainable harvest objectives under the tracking harvest strategy, I developed a rule-based model, called **LynxTrak**, as a decision-making tool. The advantage of the rule-based model is that it provides a documented, logical structure to the decision-making process that is both intuitive and experiential. Such models can process quantitative data but are most useful when coping with qualitative information to reach decisions. Rule-based models build on what is known using available literature, in-house databases, and the collective knowledge of experts. These types of models have become known as knowledge-based systems or expert systems. Expert systems are now widely used to address many situations in natural resource management, such as management of rangelands and lake systems, prescribed burning, and population modeling. The knowledge base for **LynxTrak** incorporates material from pertinent literature, lynx researchers, managers, and trappers in Alaska and Canada, and from Alaskan lynx harvest data gathered through pelt sealing.

Expert systems are used with a computer program shell to incorporate the user's experience and available information into a decision tree, which is the foundation of the rule-based model. Designers of a model first establish all potential decisions or goals that could reasonably be made regarding a particular situation. Next, questions using qualitative variables are formulated about the specific conditions or situations that may exist. Finally, a set of rules is devised as if-then scenarios that direct the user toward an informed, logical, and consistent decision. This modeling approach can provide the user with a protocol that, because it is fully documented, ensures accountability. Lynx harvest managers in southcentral Alaska have been using the model for the last few years.



Summary flow diagram of LynxTrak depicted as user input, knowledge base, and output through the 4 modules: population potential (M1), target harvest index (M2), harvest pressure (M3), and risk factor (M4). The user input (rectangles) is the response given to questions (or occasionally variables) which **LynxTrak** asks as questions. The responses are then used to calculate numerical variables that become the knowledge base (octagons). The output (ovals) consists of the knowledge base variables used in combination to calculate other numerical variables and, finally, the goal of new trapping regulations.

LynxTrak is available in a runtime version that may be downloaded from this web site. The user guide (*PDF* version – 33K) for the model should be printed to aid installation and running the model. The model is in a self-extracting zip file (668K) that includes all the files needed to run **LynxTrak**.

Full documentation and technical support for **LynxTrak** is available from Howard Golden (mailto:%20howard_golden@fishgame.state.ak.us).

Wildlife Conservation Home | Furbearers & Trapping | Top of Document

Contact: Howard Golden (mailto:%20howard_golden@fishgame.state.ak.us)
Division Webmaster: mailto:%20wcweb@fishgame.state.ak.us
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Last Modified 08/10/2001 14:02:14

Mr. Peter J. Probasco
Assistant Regional Director, Subsistence Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Probasco:

This letter delegates regulatory authority from the Federal Subsistence Board to you as Project Leader of the Office of Subsistence Management to take action when necessary to assure the conservation of healthy lynx populations and to provide for subsistence uses of lynx, consistent with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Lynx Harvest Management Strategy, on Federal lands subject to ANILCA Title VIII. This supersedes and replaces the original delegation letter dated June 15, 2001.

Overview

It is the intent of the Federal Subsistence Board that lynx management by Federal officials be coordinated with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and involve Regional Advisory Council representatives to conserve healthy populations while providing for subsistence uses. Federal managers are expected to cooperate with State managers and minimize disruption to resource users and existing agency programs, as agreed to under the Memorandum of Understanding for Coordinated Fisheries and Wildlife Management for Subsistence Uses on Federal Public lands in Alaska (December 18, 2008).

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

1. Delegation: The Project Leader of the Office of Subsistence Management is hereby delegated authority to issue special action regulations affecting lynx on Federal lands as outlined under **2. Scope of Delegation**.

2. Scope of Delegation: The regulatory authority hereby delegated is limited to authority to open, close or adjust Federal subsistence lynx seasons and to set harvest and possession limits for lynx. This delegation may be exercised only when it is necessary to conserve lynx populations or to continue subsistence uses, only within guidelines listed within the Lynx Harvest Management Strategy.

All other proposed changes to codified regulations, such as customary and traditional use determinations or adjustments to method or means of take, shall be directed to the Federal Subsistence Board.

The Federal lands subject to this delegated authority are those described in the Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska. You will coordinate your decisions with all affected Federal land managers and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

3. Effective Period: This delegation of authority is effective from the date of this letter, and continues until revoked by the Federal Subsistence Board.

4. Guidelines for Delegation: You will become familiar with the management history of lynx in the region, with the current State and Federal regulations and management plans, and be up-to-date on population and harvest status information. You will review situations that may require action and all supporting information to determine (1) if the request/situation falls within the scope of authority, (2) if significant conservation problems or subsistence harvest concerns are indicated, and (3) what the consequences of taking an action may be on potentially affected subsistence users and non-subsistence users. Requests not within your delegated authority will be forwarded to the Federal Subsistence Board for consideration. You will keep a record of all special action requests and their disposition.

You will immediately notify the Federal Subsistence Board and notify/consult with local ADF&G managers, Regional Advisory Council members, and other affected Federal conservation unit managers concerning actions being considered. You will issue timely decisions. Users, affected State and Federal managers, law enforcement personnel, and Regional Advisory Council representatives will be notified before the effective date/time of decisions.

5. Support Services: Administrative support for management activities will be provided by the Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

6. Authority: This delegation of authority is established pursuant to 36 CFR 242.10(d)(6) and 50 CFR 100.10(d)(6).

This delegation of authority will assure conservation of lynx populations through sound management decisions in cooperation with State managers, thereby providing for the long-term needs of the subsistence user.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Fleagle, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

cc:

Members of the Federal Subsistence Board
Interagency Staff Committee
Tina Cunning, ADF&G

DRAFT

WP10-05 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP10-05 seeks to update, clarify, and simplify the regulations regarding accumulation of harvest limits for both fish and wildlife. *Submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management*
Proposed Regulation	*§__.25(c) Harvest Limits.* *(1) Harvest limits authorized by this section and harvest limits established in State regulations may not be accumulated,* ***unless specified otherwise in §§__.26 or __ .27 or __.28****.* *(2)***** *(3) A harvest limit* ***may*** *~~applies~~ apply* ***to the number of fish, wildlife, or shellfish that can be taken*** *daily, seasonally and/or* ***during a regulatory year*** *or held in possession.~~; however, harvest limits for grouse (in some Units), ptarmigan, and caribou (in some Units~~**~~),~~** ~~are regulated by the number that may be taken per day. Harvest limits of~~**~~,~~** ~~grouse~~**~~,~~** ~~and ptarmigan are also regulated and the number that can be held in possession.~~*
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support**
Southeast Regional Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Regional Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Regional Council Recommendation	
Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Regional Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Regional Council Recommendation	
Eastern Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	

continued on next page

WP10-05 Executive Summary *(continued)*	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP10-05

ISSUES

Proposal WP10-05, submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management, seeks to update, clarify, and simplify the regulations regarding accumulation of harvest limits for both fish and wildlife.

DISCUSSION

A prohibition against accumulating Federal and State harvest limits has been included in the statewide general Federal subsistence regulations since 1990 (§__.25(c)(1)). Wording in Section__.25(c)(3) dates back to 1994; this section identifies the species for which harvest limits apply. There is a need to update both Sections__.25(c)(1) and (3). While the Board has addressed a number of area specific proposals concerning the accumulation of harvest limits over the years, these two sections of the general regulations have not been updated to reflect changes to the unit and area specific regulations; the current proposal addresses those inconsistencies.

Existing Federal Regulations

Statewide – Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations

> §__*.25(c) Harvest Limits.*
>
> *(1) Harvest limits authorized by this section and harvest limits established in State regulations may not be accumulated.*
>
> *(2)*****
>
> *(3) A harvest limit applies to the number of fish, wildlife, or shellfish that can be taken during a regulatory year; however, harvest limits for grouse, ptarmigan, and caribou (in some Units) are regulated by the number that may be taken per day. Harvest limits of grouse and ptarmigan are also regulated by the number that can be held in possession.*

Proposed Federal Regulations

Statewide – Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations

> *§__.25(c) Harvest Limits.*
>
> *(1) Harvest limits authorized by this section and harvest limits established in State regulations may not be accumulated,* ***unless specified otherwise in §§__.26 or __ .27 or __.28****.*
>
> *(2)*****
>
> *(3) A harvest limit* ***may*** *~~applies~~* ***apply*** *to the number of fish, wildlife, or shellfish that can be taken* ***daily, seasonally and/or*** *during a regulatory year* ***or held in possession.*** *~~; however, harvest limits for grouse (in some Units), ptarmigan, and caribou (in some Units~~**~~),~~** ~~are regulated by the number~~*

~~*that may be taken per day. Harvest limits of, grouse, and ptarmigan are also regulated and the number that can be held in possession.*~~

Existing State Regulations

In State hunting regulations a harvest (bag) limit applies to a regulatory year unless otherwise specified, and includes animals taken for any purpose, including for subsistence. State hunting regulations provide daily limits for wolves (all or part of Units 9, 10, 13, 17 and 19); caribou (all or part of Units 21, 22, 23, 24 and 26); coyote (Units 6–17, 19 and 20); grouse (1–7, 9, 11–26); hare (all or part of Units 1–5 and 14) and ptarmigan (Units 1–26).

State regulations do not prohibit the accumulation of harvest limits taken in State sport, personal use, and subsistence fisheries across most of Alaska (Kotzebue, Norton Sound-Port Clarence, Yukon-Northern, Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay, Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, Kodiak, Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound areas). In the Southeast Area, the State prohibits fishers from possessing salmon taken in the sport fishery on the same day as salmon taken in either subsistence or personal use fisheries (5 AAC 01.745(b); 5 AAC 77.682(e)). In the Yakutat Area, the State prohibits possession of personal use-taken and sport-taken salmon on the same day (5 AAC 77.628(f)).

In State subsistence fish regulations, ten areas (Norton Sound-Port Clarence, Yukon-Northern, Bristol Bay, Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, Kodiak, Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound and Southeast (5 AAC 01)) have annual harvest limits for some species of freshwater fish. The annual subsistence harvest limits specified in the Aleutian Islands, Chignik and Kodiak areas are the same as those in Federal subsistence regulations and the subsistence fisheries in these three areas are administered using State permits. There is no State subsistence daily, possession or annual harvest limit regulations for freshwater fisheries in two areas (Kotzebue and Yakutat). Only one area (Southeast Alaska) has a specific State subsistence regulatory daily and possession limit (for one species at one location; 5 AAC 01.760). Most State sport fish harvest regulations are based on daily and possession limits (5 AAC 47-75).

Extent of Federal Public Lands and Waters

This proposal would apply to the entire state. Federal public lands comprise approximately 65% of Alaska and consist of 23% Bureau of Land Management, 15% National Park Service, 21% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and 6% U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service lands.

Regulatory History

Accumulating Federal and State harvest limits

The current wording in Section __.25(c)(1) that addresses the prohibition against accumulating Federal and State harvest limits dates back to 1990. Based on requests from subsistence users, ADF&G, and the review and recommendations of the Southcentral Alaska and Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) supported several exemptions to and clarification of the general prohibition against accumulation of harvest limits in Section__.25(c)(1).

In 2004, the Board authorized accumulation of subsistence harvest limits for salmon in the Copper River drainage upstream from Haley Creek with harvest limits for salmon authorized under State of Alaska sport fishing regulations (27(i)(11)(B)). In 2005, the Board also authorized the accumulation of Federal subsistence fish annual harvest limits with State sport fishing limits for the Southeast Alaska area (27(i)(13)(vii)).

In 2006, the Board allowed accumulation of Federal subsistence fishing harvest limits with State of Alaska sport fishing harvest limits within the Chugach National Forest and in the Copper River drainage downstream from Haley Creek provided that the accumulation of fishing harvest limits would not occur in the same day (27(i)(11)(A)).

In 2009, the Board clarified regulations by stipulating that a subsistence fisher may not accumulate Federal subsistence harvest limits authorized for Southeast Alaska Area with any harvest limits authorized under any State of Alaska fishery with the following exceptions: annual and seasonal Federal subsistence harvest limits may be accumulated with State sport fishing harvest limits provided that accumulation of harvest limits does not occur during the same day (27(i)(13)(vii)). That year, the Board further clarified that fishers may not possess subsistence taken and sport taken fish of a given species on the same day in the Yakutat (27(i)(12)(viii)) and Southeast Alaska (27(i)(13)(xi)) Areas.

Current Federal subsistence management regulations that address applicability for subsistence take of wildlife (§__.26) provide the following clarification concerning accumulation of harvest limits (§__.26(e)(1)):

Except as specified in paragraphs (e)(2) or (f)(1) of this section, or as otherwise provided, you may not take a species of wildlife in any unit, or portion of a unit, if your total take of that species already obtained anywhere in the State under Federal and State regulations equals or exceeds the harvest limit in that unit.

Sections__.26(e)(2) and (f)(1) address established community harvest limit allowances and an allowance for accumulating hunting and trapping harvest limits.

The regulations that address applicability for subsistence taking of fish (§__.27) provides the following clarification concerning accumulation of harvest limits:

> *(§__.27(a)(2)) The harvest limit specified in this section for a subsistence season for a species and the State harvest limit set for a State season for the same species are not cumulative, except as modified by regulations in §__.27(i). This means that if you have taken the harvest limit for a particular species under a subsistence season specified in this section, you may not, after that, take any additional fish of that species under any other harvest limit specified for a State season.*

The regulations that address applicability for subsistence taking of shellfish (§__.28) provides the following clarification concerning accumulation of harvest limits:

> *(§__.28(d)(1)) The harvest limit specified in this section for a subsistence season for a species and the State harvest limit set for a State season for the same species are not cumulative. This means that if you have taken the harvest limit for a particular species under a subsistence season specified in this section, you may not, after that, take any additional shellfish of that species under any other harvest limit specified for a State season.*

Application of harvest limits

The current wording in Section__.25(c)(3) dates back to 1994 and specifies that harvest limits apply to "regulatory year", with the exception of ptarmigan, and in some units for grouse and caribou.

Current Federal hunting regulations (§__.26) include daily limits for beaver (Unit 9 and 17), caribou (all or part of Units 21–24 and 26); hare (all or part of Units 1–5 and 14); and wolf (part of Unit 19). There

are daily and possession limits for grouse (all or part of Units 1–7, 9 and 11–25); ptarmigan (Units 1–26); and beaver (all or part of Units 7, 11, 13 and 25).

When Federal subsistence management regulations for fish (§__.27) were first implemented on October 1, 1999, there were no specified daily or possession limits for fish in Federal regulations except on the Kenai Peninsula. Since that time, the Federal Subsistence Board has established daily and/or possession limits for specific fish species and locations in 5 of 13 fishery management areas. Federal regulatory provisions for daily harvest and/or possession limits for specific species of fish were first established in the Southeast Area in 2001, the Yukon-Northern and Cook Inlet areas in 2002, the Bristol Bay Area in 2003, and the Yakutat Area in 2006.

Current Federal subsistence management regulations include daily and/or possession limits for sockeye and coho salmon, steelhead trout, brook trout, grayling, Dolly Varden, cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout in all or parts of the Southeast Area. Yakutat Area regulations include a daily harvest and possession limit for Dolly Varden and address a daily limit for steelhead trout.

In parts of the Cook Inlet Area there are specific daily harvest and possession limits in Federal regulations for Chinook, sockeye, coho and pink salmon; Dolly Varden/Arctic char; lake trout and rainbow/steelhead trout. In other parts of the Cook Inlet Area, Federal subsistence regulations specify that the daily harvest and possession limits for fish are the same as those in Alaska sport fishing regulations. In a November 24, 2008 letter to OSM, Federal Subsistence Board Chairman Fleagle clarified that the Board's intent was that Federal subsistence and State sport harvest limit for fish not be accumulated for the Kasilof and Kenai river drainages and vicinity.

Federal subsistence management regulations also specify daily and possession limits for rainbow trout in the Bristol Bay Area and daily and possession limits for grayling in a part of the Yukon-Northern Area. There are no Federal daily or possession limits for fish in the Kotzebue, Norton Sound-Port Clarence, Kuskokwim, Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, Kodiak, or Prince William Sound areas. Federal subsistence management regulations specify annual harvest limits for fish species and locations in seven areas (Aleutian Islands, Alaska Peninsula, Chignik, Kodiak, Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and Southeast). There are no daily, possession or annual limits for fish under Federal subsistence management regulations in three areas (Kotzebue, Norton Sound-Port Clarence, and Kuskokwim).

Shellfish regulations (§__.28) include daily and posession limits as well. There are daily limits for shellfish in Bering Sea Area. There are daily and/or possession limits for shellfish in the Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and Alaska Peninsula-Aleutian Islands Areas.

Effects of the Proposal

Proposal WP10-05 does not affect fish and wildlife populations, subsistence uses or other uses (i.e., sport/recreational or commercial). Rather, the proposal seeks to update, clarify, and simplify Sections __.25(c)(1) and (3), all of which reference accumulation of harvest limits. Section__.25(c)(1) dates back to 1990 and Section __.25(c)(3) dates back to 1994. The proposed wording changes retain the general prohibition of accumulation of Federal and State harvest limits, and points to unit and area specific regulations for details and exceptions. Unit and area specific regulations currently provide daily, daily and possession, or possession limits for ptarmigan, grouse, caribou, wolf, hare, beaver, fish and shellfish. This proposal does not change any unit or area specific Federal subsistence regulations concerning accumulation of harvest limits or the timeframe (daily, seasonal or regulatory year) for harvest limits.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal FP09-05.

Justification

The general regulations concerning accumulation of harvest limits need to be updated to reflect Board action over the years. The Board has addressed a number of proposals concerning accumulation of harvest limits; the approved exceptions are reflected within the Federal hunting and trapping (§__.26), fishing (§__.27), and shellfish (§__.28) regulations. The changes to the general regulations proposed herein recognize all of the previously approved exceptions. This proposal does not affect fish and wildlife populations, subsistence users or other users. Given the number of species, areas and units affected, and the changes that may occur in the future, it is appropriate to use more general wording in these general regulations.

WP10-106/107 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposals WP10-106 and -107 seek to shorten the Unit 26 wolf hunting season and lower the harvest limit. These proposals were submitted separately, but because they ask for the same thing, they have been combined for the purposes of analysis. *Submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance*
Proposed Regulation	**Unit 26—Wolf** ***5*** *~~15 Wolves~~* ***Nov. 1–Mar. 31*** *~~Aug. 10–April 30~~*
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Oppose**
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	1 Oppose

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP10-106 AND -107

ISSUES

Proposals WP10-106 and -107 were submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance and seek to shorten the Unit 26 wolf hunting season and lower the harvest limit. These proposals were submitted separately, but because they ask for the same thing, they have been combined for the purposes of analysis.

DISCUSSION

The proponent notes that wolf pups are only half grown at the start of the current wolf hunting season and that hides are of no value at that time of year. The proponent notes that, "hunters shooting wolves in August would likely discard the low-quality hide or leave the intact carcass in the field." The proponent notes that in late April hides are rubbed and that pregnant females are approaching full term.

Existing Federal Hunting Regulation

Unit 26—Wolf

15 Wolves	*Aug. 10–April 30*

Proposed Federal Hunting Regulation

Unit 26—Wolf

5 *~~15 Wolves~~*	***Nov. 1–Mar. 31*** *~~Aug. 10–April 30~~*

Existing State Hunting Regulation

Unit 26—Wolf

10 Wolves	*Aug. 10–April 30*

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 67% of Unit 26 and consist of 68% Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 19% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and 13% National Park Service (NPS) lands (see **Unit 26 Map)**

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Rural residents of Units 6, 9, 10 (Unimak Island only), 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and Chickaloon have a positive customary and traditional use determination to harvest wolves in Unit 26.

Regulatory History

The Federal Subsistence Management Program Unit 26 wolf hunting season has been from August 10–April 30 since the start of the program. There was no harvest limit for wolves from regulatory year 1990/01 to 1993/94. Federal Subsistence Board action taken on a proposal submitted by ADF&G (Proposal 2) to align harvest limits, and supported by the North Slope Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, resulted in change to the Unit 26 wolf hunting limit to 10 wolves for regulatory year 1994/95. In regulatory year 1995/96, the harvest limit was raised to 15 wolves based on a proposal from Kuukpikmiut Village (Proposal 68). The Unit 26 wolf hunting harvest limit has remained at 15 wolves since that time.

On BLM, FWS, and Gates of the Arctic National Preserve public lands trappers may shoot a free ranging wolf during trapping season. The Federal wolf trapping season in Unit 26 is November 1–April 30. Hunters and trappers may harvest wolves under State regulations on BLM, FWS, and Arctic National Preserve public lands in Unit 26.

In 2004, Defenders of Wildlife submitted a proposal (WP05-02) requesting that wolf hunting seasons in Units 1, 3–4, 5A, 6–7, 9–13, 14C, 15–21, and 24–26 not be open until September 15. The North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council opposed that proposal, as did seven other Regional Advisory Councils. Consistent with these Regional Advisory Council recommendations, the Federal Subsistence Board rejected proposal WP05-02.

Defenders of Wildlife submitted a proposal (Proposal 29) to the Alaska Board of Game requesting a November 1–March 31 wolf hunting season for Unit 26A. At its November 2009 meeting in Nome, the Alaska Board of Game did not support this proposal, noting that there are no wolf conservation concerns in Unit 26A, the proposal would decrease opportunity for harvest, and public testimony did not support proposal (Ardizzone 2009, pers. comm.).

Biological Background

Wolves (*Canis lupus)* are found throughout Unit 26 and are well adapted to living in the mountains of the Brooks Range, and the tundra of the Arctic Slope. Unit 26 contains extensive open habitat and a large seasonal prey base is available to wolves. Their main prey in the central Brooks Range and Arctic Slope is caribou; wolves often move toward areas of high caribou concentrations. Other prey species may be used extensively if caribou are not available, principally sheep, small mammals, moose, snowshoe hare, and beaver.

Wolves first breed at age two to four and produce pups in dens during the spring. Litters average five or six pups. Wolves abandon the den after about eight weeks and live at sites above ground until early autumn when the entire pack roams a large territory for the rest of the fall and winter. In the central Brooks Range study, pups constituted about half of the wolf population each August; these young wolves disperse from packs at high rates as yearlings and 2-year-olds (Adams et al. 2008).

Dispersing wolves form new packs when they locate dispersers of the opposite sex from another pack and a vacant area to establish a territory (Rothman and Mech 1979). The size of the home range is believed to be dependent on prey abundance, the activities of neighboring packs, and each pack's individual habits. As a pack makes its way around its territory, it may encounter and engage other wolves within its territory at any time. A fight to the death can occur during such encounters.

Predation by other wolves and rabies are probably the major causes of natural mortality among adult wolves (Stephenson 2006, Zarnke and Ballard 1987). Adams et al. (2008) reported that 7 of 11 dispersing wolves (<36 months old) were subsequently detected 40–430 miles from their initial home range in the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Garner and Reynolds (1986) observed that several wolves in northern Arctic National Wildlife Refuge dispersed as far as 500 miles from their home range. With high reproductive capacity, good survival of young, and high dispersal rates, wolf populations are able to quickly respond to changes in prey abundance (Adams et al. 2008).

Unit 26 wolf populations appear to be stable or increasing (Stephenson 2006, Carroll 2006), but data on population trends are limited. In 1992 and 1993, estimates from surveys, hunter observations, and harvest data indicated that 390–605 wolves in 166–342 packs were present in Unit 26 (Stephenson 2006, Carroll 2006). These estimates are still considered representative. Wolf population density estimates ranged from 4–11 wolves/1000 mi^2 in parts of Units 26 (Stephenson 2006, Carroll 2006). Resident packs are rare on the coastal plain in the northern portion of these subunits (Garner and Reynolds 1986). Garner and Reynolds (1986) reported that 8 of 11 packs studied in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge included 5 or fewer wolves, with low pup production and survival. Summer pup survival rates for packs of <5 wolves were 23–25%, while larger packs had nearly 100% pup survival.

Based on an analysis of information regarding North American wolf populations, Adams et al. (2008) provided evidence that wolf populations compensate for human exploitation <29% via adjustments in dispersal (i.e., local dispersal, emigration, and immigration). ADF&G's management objectives for Units 26B and 26C include providing a sustained annual harvest rate of no more than 30% of the combined wolf population and accommodating nonconsumptive uses (Stephenson 2006).

Harvest History

Wolves harvested in Alaska must be sealed by an ADF&G representative or appointed fur sealer. During the sealing process, information is obtained on the date and location of take, sex, color of pelt, estimated size of the wolf pack, method of take and access used. Harvest data are summarized by regulatory year.

From regulatory year 1999/2000 to 2007/08, the reported annual harvest of wolves in Unit 26 ranged from 10 to 55 wolves/year (**Table 1**). A significant amount of the harvest in Unit 26 comes from the western subunit (26A). Carroll (2006) noted that pelts of most wolves harvested in Unit 26A are used locally for manufacture of parka ruffs or handicrafts, and many of the wolves taken in that subunit are not sealed. Carroll (2000) observed that the actual Unit 26C wolf harvest is two or more times the number reported and that there is a need to develop a harvest reporting system that is more acceptable to local residents.

Some harvest occurs from August 10 through October 31 when only hunting season is open. Hunters occasionally take wolves opportunistically in the fall when they are hunting caribou, moose, or sheep (Adams et al. 2008). During much of this period, snow cover and rivers or lake ice conditions are inadequate for snow-machine travel or tracking wolves. Once snow-cover and ice are adequate for travel, trappers began establishing and maintaining trap lines. Because of limited day-length from November through January, little effort is expended hunting wolves though some are taken opportunistically in conjunction with trapping-related activities. Travel conditions begin improving in February with increasing day-length and there is a shift to wolf hunting activities reaching a peak in March. Wolf harvest declines in April as the trapping season is closed and snow and ice conditions deteriorate with the spring melt (Adams et al. 2008, Ballard et al. 1997). Most of the wolves harvested in Unit 26 are shot; a lesser number are taken with traps and snares (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Reported wolf harvest and method of take for Unit 26 (ADF&G 2009).

Regulatory	Reported Total	Aug.–Oct. & April	Method of Take				
Year	Harvest	Harvest	Trap/ snare	(%)	Shot	%	Unk
1999/2000	33	9	15	45	16	48	2
2000/01	55	21	16	29	39	71	0
2001/02	21	4	6	29	15	71	0
2002/03	14	6	4	29	10	71	0
2003/04	29	1	12	41	17	59	0
2004/05	10	4	0	0	6	60	4
2005/06	19	7	1	5	18	95	0
2006/07	35	15	6	17	29	83	0
2007/08	34	17	5	15	27	79	2
2008/09							

Stephenson (2006) estimated that during RY2002/04, the harvest was 7–11% of the wolf population in Units 26B and 26C. In Unit 26A, Carroll (2006) noted that much of the wolf population inhabiting the Brooks Range is probably not heavily hunted or trapped, except for the area within 50–70 miles of Anaktuvuk Pass. Carroll (2006) observed that hunters from other North Slope villages range over much of the coastal plain. Adams et al. (2008) observed an annual harvest rate of 11.6% in a Central Brooks range study area.

Adams et al. (2008) observed that wolf harvests in and adjacent to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are largely unaffected by changes in the hunting harvest limits because there are environmental constraints and most hunters take few wolves. The dynamics of the wolf population is regulated more by natural factors than by the harvest by hunters and trappers. Adams et al. (2008) observed that wolves are prolific and survival of young is generally high; thus, surplus individuals are abundant and available to be harvested. The number of wolves harvested in Unit 26 is low relative to the wolf population size. Based on an analysis of information regarding North American wolf populations, Adams et al. (2008) concluded that the wolf populations appeared to be largely unaffected by human take of ≤29% annually. Given the limited effects of moderate levels of human take, they concluded that the risks of reducing wolf populations through regulated harvest are quite low.

Brower (2009 pers. comm.) said that village residents of the North Slope never shoot wolves and just leave them lay. He said that residents don't start hunting wolves until the quality of wolf hides improves when the weather gets cold, usually in late October or November. He observed that they often have good snow cover, good wolf hunting conditions, and good wolf fur through early May. He indicated that incidental take of a sick or harassing animal may happen at any time of year.

Effects of the Proposal

If WP10-105 or -106 is adopted, it would shorten the Unit 26 Federal wolf hunting season by 114 days and reduce the harvest limit from 15 to 5 wolves. This would decrease opportunity for subsistence hunters to harvest wolves in Unit 26. Between 1999–2008, 34% of the reported Unit 26 wolf harvest occurred in August, September, October, and April (**Table 1)**. If the proposals were adopted, the opportunity for

subsistence users to harvest wolves during the fall when they are hunting caribou, moose, or sheep would be eliminated.

These proposals would make the Federal subsistence wolf hunting season shorter than the State season and the harvest limit would be lower than the State regulations.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Oppose proposals WP10-106 and -107

Justification

The wolf population in Unit 26 is thought to be healthy. The current harvest rate for Unit 26 wolves is thought to be low, though reporting may be significantly underestimating actual harvest. Wolves are prolific and survival of young is generally high. Young wolves disperse from packs at high rates as yearlings and two-year-olds; these individuals are abundant and available to be harvested. The population of wolves in Unit 26 is regulated more by natural factors than by the harvest by hunters and trappers.

Federal and State wolf hunting seasons in Unit 26 are the same. At its November meeting in Nome, the Alaska Board of Game did not support a proposal from the Defenders of Wildlife to shorten the Unit 26A wolf hunting season.

Wolves are a very important subsistence resource in Unit 26. The harvest of wolves and the use, barter, and sale of pelts has long been a part of the subsistence economy. Over the past decade, approximately one-third of the reported wolf harvest in Unit 26 has occurred in the months of August, September, October, and April. In the fall, the wolves have shorter hair and their hides are used primarily for personal use to make clothing and handicrafts. Wolves are a highly prized and valued subsistence resource in Unit 26.

Even if these proposals were adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board, hunters would still be able to take wolves on FWS, BLM, and Gates of the Arctic National Preserve public lands during August, September, October, and April under State regulations. Adoption of proposals WP10-106 and -107 would not have the effect sought by the proponent unless these Federal public lands were also closed to wolf hunting by non-Federally qualified user during August, September, October and April.

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WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

Oppose. Alaska Professional Hunters Association opposes these proposals. We have a very high level of respect for Alaska's wolf population and believe they are integral to the fabric of Alaska. However, they have to have population control measures that will enable prey species to live within balance of what their habitats will provide. Wolves have to be included into the management process in an active enough manner to provide maximum human benefit from the prey species. This type of management provides the best stewardship possible for the prey species as well as all people who depend upon or enjoy the benefit of high density population equilibriums. As the Federal Subsistence Board is mandated with providing important subsistence hunting opportunities and the scope of these proposals takes away from that objective, we encourage the Board not to pass these proposals.

WP10-67 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP10-67 requests changes in harvest seasons and limits for moose in Unit 24B. *Submitted by the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council*
Proposed Regulation	*See analysis for regulatory language.*
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support** Proposal WP10-67 **with modification** to: 1. Change the floating date range of the proposed 10-day "to be announced" season to a set date range of March 27–April 5; 2. Include all of the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge in Unit 24B, and all BLM lands in Unit 24B, along with the Kanuti Controlled Use Area, in the "to be announced" season; 3. Not include a six year moratorium on cow moose harvest. 4. Streamline regulatory language on hunt management.
Western Interior Regional Council Recommendation	
North Slope Regional Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP10-67

ISSUE

Proposal WP10-67, submitted by the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council), requests changes in harvest seasons and limits for moose in Unit 24B.

DISCUSSION

The proponent is requesting 1) a change in dates for the winter season to March 15–April 15, 2) a longer "to be announced" season of ten days instead of five during those dates, 3) changes to the description of areas (portions) of Unit 24B, which, in addition to the John River drainage, would be "all Federal land within the Kanuti Controlled Use Area" and "remainder," and 4) changing the harvest limit from "1 moose" to "1 antlered moose" with a six year moratorium on cow moose harvest in the Kanuti Controlled Use Area, with an exception for mortuary purposes. No changes are proposed for the John River drainage portion of Unit 24B.

The proponent states that the current regulations which allow for a March 1–5 "to be announced" season only applies to a portion of Unit 24B, "all drainages to the north of the Koyukuk River, except the John River." Because of an artifact of regulatory history (when Unit 24 was subdivided into four subunits), the area authorized to be opened in the "to be announced" winter season contains only a small portion of the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge within the Kanuti Controlled Use Area. The proponent also states that the area currently available to be opened in the "to be announced" winter season does not provide enough opportunity for subsistence harvest by residents of Allakaket, Alatna, Evansville, and Bettles in times of hardship due mostly to poor hunting success during the fall season. Opening all Federal public land within the Kanuti Controlled Use Area of Unit 24B would provide more opportunity.

In both 2007 and 2008, the Allakaket Tribal Council requested, through Special Action (WSA06-08 and WSA07-09), a season extension of the March 1–5 hunt because of extremely cold weather conditions during the announced and scheduled March 1–5 season. In 2007, a special 5-day hunt was granted for March 20–24. In 2008, a 3-day extension was granted for March 8–10. Over the past few years, early March has tended to be extremely cold in Unit 24B resulting in conditions which have made hunting difficult. In 2007 and 2008, there were no successful hunters during the March 1–5 "to be announced" season or the extended opportunities through Special Action. In 2009, season dates were changed from March 1–5 to March 27–31 by Special Action to accommodate the desires of the Allakaket Tribal Council. In 2009, one moose hunter was successful in the March 27–31 Federal hunt. The proponent, therefore, believes that the March 1–5 season has provided little meaningful opportunity to meet subsistence needs, especially in hardship years, and that changing the current 5-day, "to be announced" March 1–5 season to the proposed 10-day, "to be announced" season between March 15–April 15, would better accommodate hunting for subsistence users.

The later dates and longer window for the "to be announced" season would assist users in field identification of the sex of the moose, to avoid the inadvertent harvest of a cow. By early April, bull moose are starting to show the first signs of antler growth, thus helping to alleviate the problem encountered in the early March hunt of readily distinguishing bulls from cows. Increased light conditions also aid in identification and provide more hours of harvest opportunity.

The proponent noted that there is precedent for late winter hunts in the area. Up until 2004, there was a March 1–10 State general hunt for antlerless moose (eliminated by Alaska Board of Game action in April 2004). More recently (2008), the Alaska Board of Game has allowed a late-winter bulls-only hunt in a nearby Unit 26B (April 2–16).

The proponent also requests a six-year moratorium (until July 1, 2016) on cow moose harvest (with exception for mortuary purposes) and believes this moratorium is needed because the moose population most likely cannot support a cow harvest at present and in the near future. The proponent wants the regulations to specify "antlered bull" not just "bull" to emphasize the need to avoid the inadvertent harvest of a cow (WIRAC 2009).

The proponent also submitted a similar proposal to the Alaska Board of Game, requesting an antlered bull moose hunt in April in the State's non-remainder portion of Unit 24. The Alaska Board of Game is scheduled to take up the proposal during its February 2010 meeting in Fairbanks. However, the Kanuti Controlled Use Area is closed in Federal regulations to the take of moose by non-Federally qualified users.

Existing Federal Regulations

Unit 24B — Moose

Unit 24B, that portion within the John River Drainage–1 moose	*Aug. 1–Dec.31*
Unit 24B, all drainages to the north of the Koyukuk River, except the John River drainage — 1 moose; however, antlerless moose may be taken only from Sept. 27–Oct. 1 and Mar. 1–5, if authorized jointly by the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge Manager, the BLM Central Yukon Field Office Manager, and the Gates of the Arctic National Park Superintendent. A Federal registration permit is required for the Sept. 26–Oct. 1 and Mar. 1–5 seasons. Harvest of cows accompanied by calves is prohibited. The announcement will be made after consultation with the ADF&G Area Biologist and Chairs of the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, and the Koyukuk River Fish and Game Advisory Committee.	*Aug. 25–Oct. 1* *Mar. 1–Mar. 5* *Season to be announced*
Federal public lands in the Kanuti Controlled use Area are closed to the taking of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users of Unit 24, Koyukuk, and Galena hunting under these regulations.	
Unit 24B remainder — 1 antlered bull. A Federal registration permit is required for the Sept. 26–Oct. 1 season.	*Aug. 25–Oct. 1*
Federal public lands in the Kanuti Controlled Use Area are closed to the taking of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users of Unit 24, Koyukuk, and Galena, hunting under these regulations.	

Proposed Federal Regulations

Unit 24B — Moose

Unit 24B, that portion within the John River Drainage — 1 moose	*Aug. 1–Dec.31*
~~Unit 24B, all drainages to the north of the Koyukuk River, except the John River drainage — 1 moose; however, antlerless moose may be taken only from Sept. 27–Oct. 1 and Mar. 1–5, if authorized jointly by the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge Manager, the BLM Central Yukon Field Office Manager, and the Gates of the Arctic National Park Superintendent. A Federal registration permit is required for the Sept. 26–Oct. 1 and Mar. 1–5 seasons. Harvest of cows accompanied by calves is prohibited. The announcement will be made after consultation with the ADF&G Area Biologist and Chairs of the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, and the Koyukuk River Fish and Game Advisory Committee.~~	*~~Aug. 25–Oct. 1~~* *~~Mar. 1–Mar. 5~~* *~~Season to be announced~~*
Unit 24B Kanuti Controlled Use Area — 1 antlered bull. If a March–April season is authorized jointly by the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge Manager, the BLM Central Yukon Field Office Manager, and the Gates of the Arctic National Park Superintendent, the 10-day, "to be announced" season and numerical harvest quota of moose will be determined based on biological sustainability of the population, maintaining the bull/cow ratio management objective. The harvest quota would apply to Federal and State concurrent hunts, if applicable. Opening of the "to be announced" season will be decided after consultation with the ADF&G Area Biologist and Chairs of the Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, and the Koyukuk River Fish and Game Advisory Committee. The Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge Manager is authorized to close the season once the quota is reached. A Federal registration permit is required for the Aug 25–Oct. 1 season, and the March 15–April 15 season.	***Aug. 25–Oct. 1*** ***Mar. 15–Apr. 15*** ***Season to be announced***
Federal public lands in the Kanuti Controlled Use Area are closed to the taking of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users of Unit 24, Koyukuk, and Galena, hunting under these regulations. ***A moratorium on cow moose harvest is in effect until July 1, 2016, but does not affect harvest for mortuary purposes.***	
Unit 24B remainder — 1 antlered bull. A Federal registration permit is required for the Sept. 26–Oct. 1 period. ~~Federal public lands in the Kanuti Controlled use Area are closed to the taking of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users of Unit 24, Koyukuk, and Galena hunting under these regulations.~~	*Aug. 25–Oct. 1*

Existing State Regulations

Unit 24B all drainages of the Koyukuk River upstream from the Henshaw Creek drainage, excluding the North Fork of the Koyukuk River drainage	*Resident: One bull*	*Sept. 1–Sept. 25*
	Nonresident: One bull with 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side.	*Sept. 5–Sept. 25*
Unit 24B remainder	*Resident: One bull*	*Sept. 1–Sept. 25 or Dec. 1–Dec. 10*
	Nonresident: One bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one	*Sept. 5–Sept. 25*

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 64% of Unit 24 (22% National Park Service, 21% Bureau of Land Management, and 21% Fish and Wildlife Service lands) (See **Unit Map 24**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Residents of Unit 24, Anaktuvuk Pass, Koyukuk, and Galena have a positive customary and traditional use determination for moose in Unit 24.

Regulatory History

An extension of the winter hunt season and a similar modification of the winter hunt area was accomplished by Special Action requests WSA06-08 (decision dated March 15, 2007), and WSA07-09 (decision dated February 26, 2008). In both years, the Allakaket Tribal Council requested a season extension of the March 1–5 hunt because of extremely cold weather conditions during the March 1–5 season. In 2007, a special 5-day additional hunt was granted for March 20–24. In 2008, a 3-day extension was granted for March 8–10. In 2009, season dates were changed from March 1–5 to March 27–31 by Special Action request to accommodate the desires of the Allakaket Tribal Council. The season for the remainder of Unit 24B outside the Kanuti Controlled Use Area remained unchanged.

Biological Background

The Koyukuk River Moose Management Plan 2000–2005 (Management Plan) (ADF&G 2001) set the management goals/objectives for the Koyukuk River moose population. For the portion of Unit 24 where the Kanuti Controlled Use Area is located, the management intent is to maintain or increase moose populations while providing for continuation of a moderate hunter participation and moderate level of harvest. Bull:cow ratios of up to 30–40 bulls:100 cows for this low density population may be necessary to allow for adequate breeding where cows are sparsely distributed. Calf:cow ratios of 30–40 calves:100 cows were prescribed by the Management Plan to support population growth (ADF&G 2001). Overall, an increase in population is desired before additional harvest can be considered. While indications suggest this population may be growing, the population's size and density remain low.

Population surveys have been conducted on Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) since 1989. However, the surveys in 1989 and 1993 used the Gasaway method, and are not easily compared to the

more recent surveys. The surveys conducted from 1999 to 2008 (**Table 1**) employed the GeoSpatial Population Estimator technique (Kellie and Delong 2006) and can be compared more readily (Gasaway et al. 1986).

The moose population on the Refuge has been relatively stable but at low levels since 1999 (**Figure 1**). The population estimate for 2008 was 872 moose compared to an estimated 588 moose in 2007, resulting in population densities of 0.32 and 0.22 moose per square mile, respectively (**Table 1)** (FWS 2008). The 2007 density estimate was the lowest recorded for the Refuge and was significantly lower than the 1999 estimate. However, because of variability of the surveys, it is difficult to definitively determine a population trend (**Figure 1**). It should also be noted that the 90% confidence intervals for most of the population estimates overlap, indicating that there is no significant change.

Since 1999, the calf:cow ratios have been higher than the objective in the Management Plan which may be an indication that this population could be growing (**Table 1**).

A moose survey was scheduled to take place in November 2009, but was canceled by Refuge staff due to extreme cold (< - 40° F) weather conditions (Spindler 2009b).

Harvest History

Harvest data compiled by the ADF&G for Unit 24B, between 1989 and 2007, revealed that both the number of moose harvested and hunter success have declined **(Table 2**).

The reported Federal subsistence harvest has been low for registration hunts RM892, RM893, and RM895 in 2006 and 2007 (**Table 3**).

The long-term annual harvest estimates for the communities of Alatna and Allakaket averaged 44.8 moose (ADF&G household surveys, Brown et al. 2004). It should be noted that the permit data reported above is specific to Unit 24B, whereas household survey data are not. In the period 1997–2003, annual moose harvest averaged 33.7 bulls and 3.4 cows in Allakaket, while Alatna harvested an annual average of 5.4 bulls and 2.3 cows in the same period (Brown et al. 2004). Most (87.5%) of these moose were taken in September, and only a few (12.5%) were taken in March.

The combination of a telephone survey, ADF&G harvest tickets and Federal permits provided a total estimated harvest of 14 moose by Allakaket/Alatna in the fall 2008 hunt (**Table 4**). No one harvested a moose during the State's general winter hunt December 1–10, despite several days of effort by five hunters in 2008. It is estimated that the villages of Allakaket and Alatna harvested about 30% of their recent historic number of moose (as indicated by the 1997–2003 ADF&G Division of Subsistence surveys, Brown et al. 2004) in 2008. Similar harvest shortfalls were observed in the fall harvests of 2006 and 2007. For that reason, Federal agencies agreed to provide a five day bulls-only additional hunting opportunity, March 1–5, in both 2007 and 2008 in Unit 24B (Spindler 2008).

The March 2007 and 2008 hunts were limited to "bulls only" because of the low moose population. Hunting effort declined from March 2007 to March 2008, because of low temperatures, the difficulty of approaching a bull within shooting range at low temperatures. As a result, no one was successful in harvesting moose in either of the initial five-day seasons. In both 2007 and 2008, the March 1–5 hunt dates were extended by Special Action Request because of the extreme cold weather. The observed effort was less during the requested extension periods than during the originally authorized periods in both years, even though temperatures were somewhat milder but still no moose were harvested (**Table 5**). Hunters did report seeing some bulls on Doyon or Koyitlotsina Corp. lands, but apparently had no

Table 1. Summary of moose population survey data for Kanuti NWR, 1999–2008 (FWS 2008).

	1999	2004	2005	2007	2008
Survey Area (miles^2)[1]	2,715	2,710	2,710	2,714	2,715
Units Surveyed	108	103	82	150	80
Population Estimate	1,003	842	1,025	588	872
Standard Error	127	146	270	76	124
Range of Estimate[2]	794–1,211	602–1,083	581–1,470	463–714	669–1,075
Moose Density (moose/mile^2)	0.37	0.31	0.38	0.22	0.32
Estimated Cows	542	403	471	276	432
Estimated Bulls	320	252	331	167	199
Bulls:100 Cows	59	62	70	60	46
Yearling Bulls:100 Cows	4	9	20	13	14
Calves:100 Cows	30	46	43	53	58

[1] Survey areas vary slightly among years depending on how survey units were delineated and how units intersected the refuge boundary. Units extending beyond the boundary were considered "in" the refuge, even if much of the unit was outside the boundary.
[2] 90% confidence interval.

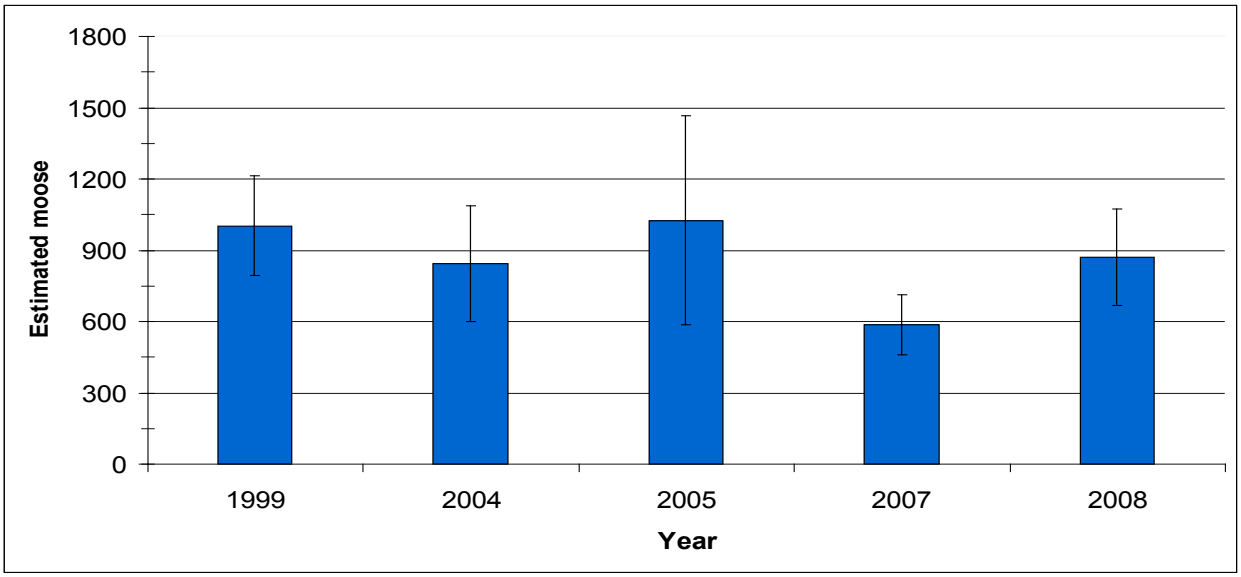


Figure 1. Graphic results of moose population surveys conducted in the Kanuti NWR, 1999–2008 (FWS 2008).

Table 2. Harvest by residency and success rates from ADF&G reported harvest returns for fall hunts (ADF&G 2008).

Period	Total Moose Harvest	Total 24B Res. Harvest	Total Other AK Res. Harvest	Total Nonres. Harvest	24B Res. Success Rate	Other AK Res, Success Rate	Nonres. Success Rate
1989 –1999	61	12	39	10	58%	47%	49%
2000–2007	43	8	26	9	48%	35%	34%

Table 3. Reported harvest for Federal Registration Permits in Unit 24B for 2006–2008 (OSM 2009).

Year	Number of moose harvested (RM892)	Number of moose harvested (RM893)	Number of moose harvested (RM895)
2006	0	2 bulls	0
2007	0	4 bulls	0
2008	0	3 bulls	1 bull

Notes:

RM892 — Federal Registration Permit for Unit 24B all drainages to the north of the Koyukuk River, except the John River Drainage (Sept. 27–Oct. 1)

RM893 — Federal Registration Permit for Unit 24B remainder (Aug. 25–Oct. 1)

RM895 — Federal Registration Permit for Unit 24B all drainages to the north of the Koyukuk River, except the John River Drainage (Mar.1–Mar. 5 season to be announced)

Table 4. Reported moose hunting activity by Allakaket and Alatna residents according to State harvest ticket records during the September and December general hunts (Spindler 2009a).

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Moose harvested	6	5	5	6	12	12	18	14

Note: Reporting compliance in 2001–2004 likely low. Better and more accurate reports in 2005–2008 based on telephone polls made by a contracted local resident.

Table 5. Reported moose hunting activity during Federal subsistence hunts, March 2007 and March 2008, based on permit returns and telephone interviews (Spindler 2009a).

	2007	2008
Season dates	March 1–5, 20–24	March 1–5, 8–10
Total of number Federal permits issued	27	13
Hunters that did not report	0	0
Hunters that actually hunted	10	9
Range in hunting days	1–10	1–5
Average days hunted per hunter that went afield	3.8	2.6
Number of moose harvested	0	0

opportunities to shoot bulls on Federal lands. Hunters also reported seeing a few cows and cow/calf pairs (Spindler 2009a).

Current Events

After the October 2009 Council meeting, the merits of replacing the floating date range of the proposed "to be announced" season with a set date range of March 27–April 5, was recognized in discussions between the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge Manager and the Council Chair. This would address concerns of the ADF&G Area Biologist (also expressed after the Council meeting) that snow and ice travel conditions become less reliable April 10–15. The Refuge Manager also noted that there is usually a local spring carnival dog race the first weekend in April and villagers prefer that the spring hunt dates not overlap with the carnival. The March 27–April 5 dates would therefore be as late as practicable to have a better chance of mild weather and allowing for some antler growth to occur, making it easier to discern bulls. The Refuge Manager also pointed out that both Federal and State managers and hunters prefer a consistent set 10-day hunting season over a floating time period (Spindler 2009b), should a season be authorized.

Effects of the Proposal

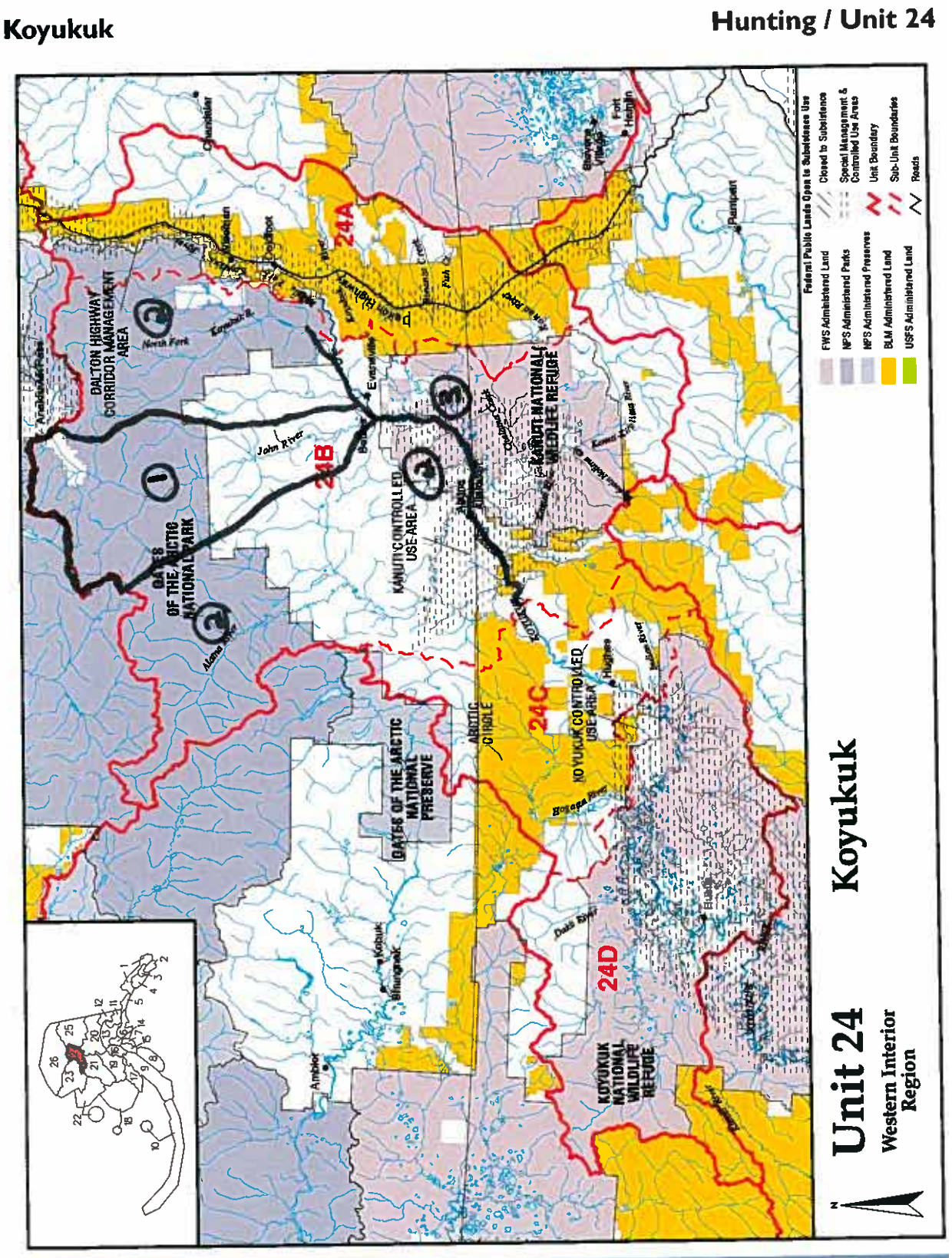
If the proposal were adopted, a few more bulls may be harvested from the Unit 24B moose population during the winter season. Federal land managers would set a quota during the winter season on the number of moose that could be harvested, which would address conservation concerns. The proposed regulatory language would apply a quota set by the Federal manager to any concurrent applicable State hunt, but that would not be within the authority of the Federal manager. The hunt would be allowed on all Federal public lands in Unit 24B within the Kanuti Controlled Use Area, thus providing more subsistence opportunity to local Federally qualified subsistence users, while spreading the harvest over a larger area. Expanding the "to be announced season" from 5 to 10 days, and moving the dates of the "to be announced" hunt from early March to a mid-March to mid-April time frame, should improve the chance of success for Federally qualified subsistence users. **Map 2** illustrates the geographic areas of differing moose harvest limit and season applicability in Unit 24B under current Federal regulations, and **Map 3** illustrates proposed changes.

Non-subsistence users would not be affected because Federal public lands within the Kanuti Controlled Use Area in Unit 24B are currently closed to non-Federally qualified moose hunters. Currently, the moose population, although at a low density, exhibits a healthy bull/cow ratio, good productivity and recruitment. The population should be able to support the additional subsistence harvest of a few bull moose by Federally qualified users without causing any conservation concerns.

Other than the John River drainage, the hunt area descriptions of Unit 24B — the "Kanuti Controlled Use Area" and "remainder" would be different than current descriptions if this proposal was adopted. These differences would take active outreach (by Refuge staff) to inform hunters of this change to prevent inadvertent violations. The hunt areas would continue to differ from State hunt areas in Unit 24B.

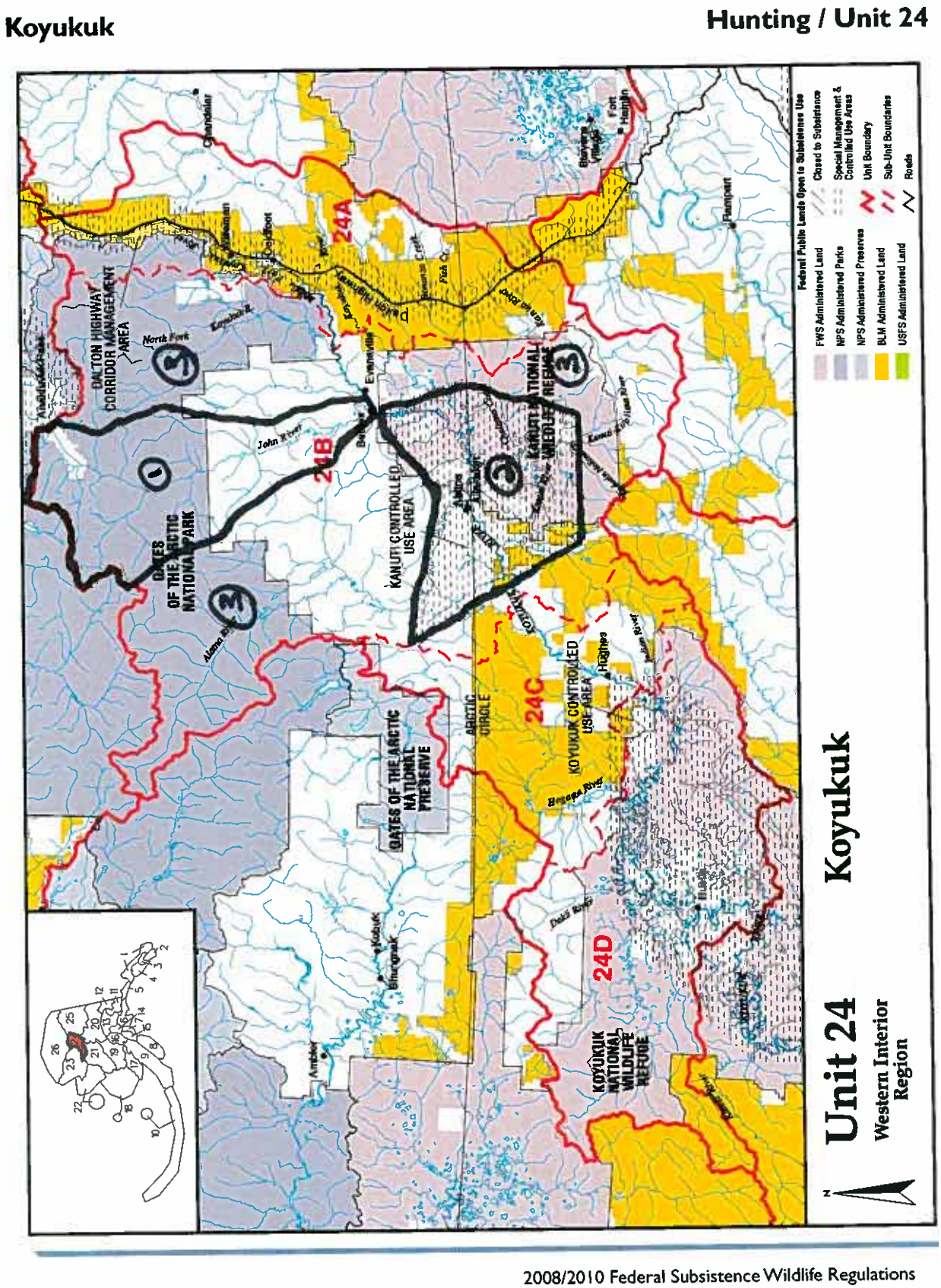
Portions of the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge and BLM lands in Unit 24B would fall into both the "Kanuti Controlled Use Area" and "remainder" hunt areas. In discussions with the Refuge manager and BLM staff, it is their preference that all of the Refuge and BLM lands in Unit 24B be included in the "to be announced" hunt, along with the Kanuti Controlled Use Area. This would provide additional opportunity to Federally qualified subsistence users. There is a small part of the eastern side of the Refuge in Unit 24A that would not be affected by this proposal.

Map 2. Geographic areas of differing moose harvest limit and season applicability in Unit 24B under current Federal regulations.



2008/2010 Federal Subsistence Wildlife Regulations

Map 3. Geographic areas of differing moose harvest limit and season applicability in Unit 24B under proposed Federal regulations.



2008/2010 Federal Subsistence Wildlife Regulations

A six year moratorium on cow moose harvest would be specified in regulation. However, this is unnecessary, as the proposed harvest limit is "1 antlered bull," which would prohibit the harvest of a cow. In order to harvest cows in the future in the portion of Unit 24B affected by this proposal, a Special Action request or proposal would need to be submitted, whether or not the moratorium language is adopted. The remainder area retains the current harvest limit of one antlered bull, and no cow moose moratorium has been proposed.

Much of the area north of the Koyukuk River (excluding the John River drainage), which had formerly been described as a separate hunt area, would be encompassed within the remainder area if this proposal were adopted as submitted. The current one moose limit in Unit 24B north of the Koyukuk, except the John River, with allowance for antlerless take when authorized would be supplanted by the one antlered bull limit applicable to Unit 24B remainder. No changes are proposed for the John River drainage. Federally qualified users who hunt in Gates of the Arctic National Park lands to the west and east of the John River drainage (**Map 3**) would, if this proposal were adopted, find that the season and harvest limit would change, taking on the regulations applicable to the current remainder area.

OSM Preliminary Conclusion

Support Proposal WP10-67 **with modification** to:

1. Change the floating date range of the proposed 10-day "to be announced" season to a set date range of March 27–April 5;

2. Include all of the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge in Unit 24B, and all BLM lands in Unit 24B, along with the Kanuti Controlled Use Area, in the "to be announced" season (**Map 4**);

3. Not include a six year moratorium on cow moose harvest.

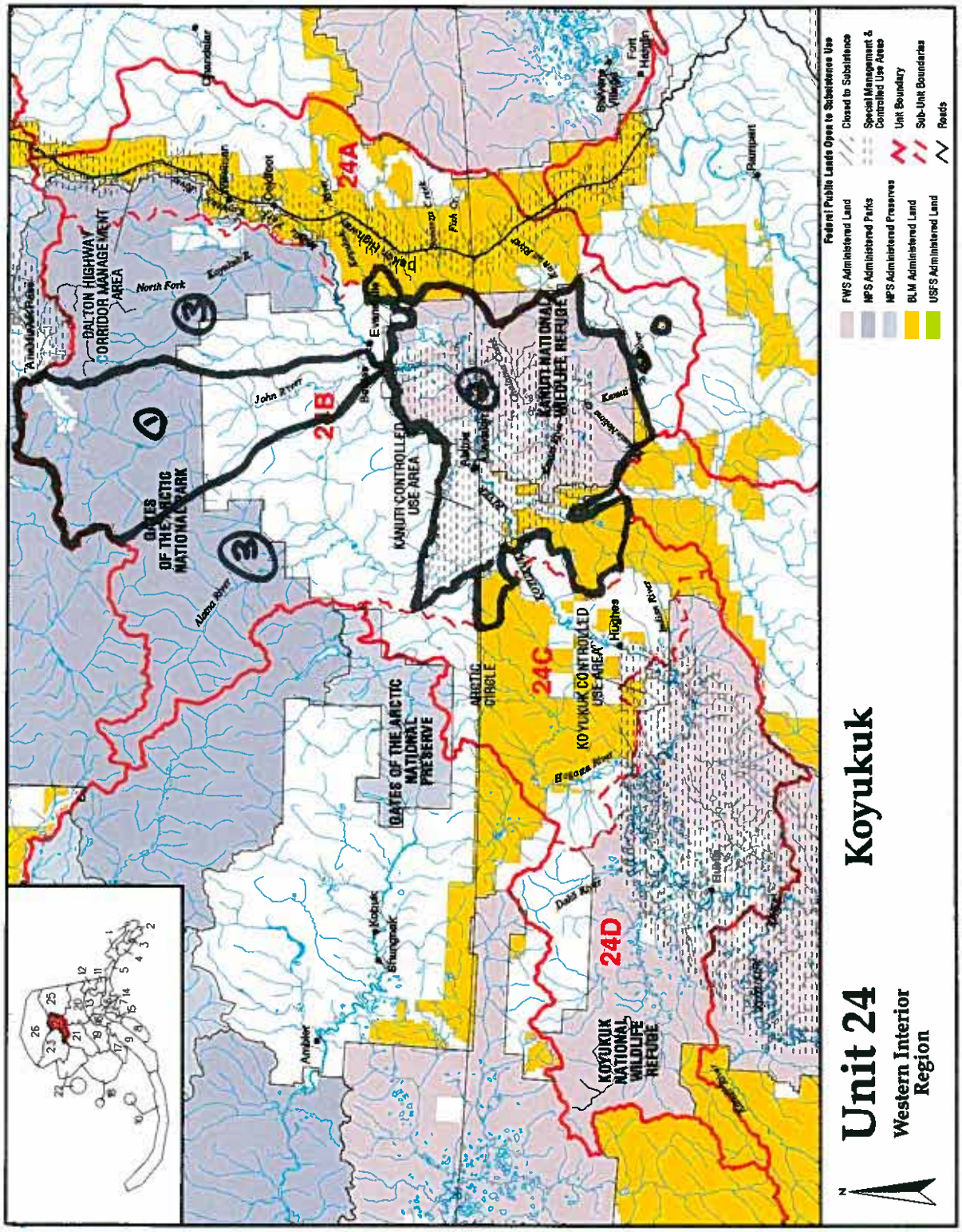
4. Streamline regulatory language on hunt management.

The modified proposed regulations would read:

Unit 24B — Moose

Unit 24B, that portion within the John River Drainage — 1 moose	*Aug. 1–Dec.31*
~~*Unit 24B, all drainages to the north of the Koyukuk River, except the John River drainage — 1 moose; however, antlerless moose may be taken only from Sept. 27–Oct. 1 and Mar. 1–5, if authorized jointly by the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge Manager, the BLM Central Yukon Field Office Manager, and the Gates of the Arctic National Park Superintendent. A Federal registration permit is required for the Sept. 26–Oct. 1 and Mar. 1–5 seasons. Harvest of cows accompanied by calves is prohibited. The announcement will be made after consultation with the ADF&G Area Biologist and Chairs of the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, and the Koyukuk River Fish and Game Advisory Committee.*~~	~~*Aug. 25–Oct. 1*~~ ~~*Mar. 1–Mar. 5*~~ ~~*Season to be announced*~~

Map 4. Geographic areas of differing moose harvest limit and season applicability in Unit 24B under OSM preliminary conclusion.



Unit 24B Kanuti Controlled Use Area and Kanuti Wildlife Refuge and BLM lands outside of the Kanuti Controlled Use Area — 1 antlered bull. A Federal registration permit is required. Authorization of a March 27–April 5 season, determination of the harvest quota, and closing of the hunt will be done under the authority delegated to the Federal manager in consultation with Federal agencies, ADF&G staff, and public advisory groups as stipulated in the letter of delegation.	***Aug. 25–Oct. 1*** ***Mar. 27–Apr. 5*** ***Season to be announced***
Federal public lands in the Kanuti Controlled Use Area are closed to the taking of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users of Unit 24, Koyukuk, and Galena, hunting under these regulations.	
Unit 24B remainder 1 antlered bull. A Federal registration permit is required for the Sept. 26–Oct. 1 period. ~~Federal public lands in the Kanuti Controlled Use Area are closed to the taking of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users of Unit 24, Koyukuk, and Galena, hunting under these regulations.~~	*Aug. 25–Oct. 1*

Justification

Including all Federal land within the Kanuti Controlled Use Area and the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge in Unit 24B would provide more opportunity, especially for residents of Allakaket, Alatna, Evansville and Bettles, who have been experiencing hardships in recent years.

A set, 10-day season of March 27–April 5, helps assure that the "to be announced" hunt, if authorized, will take place when temperatures are likely to not be as cold as those often found in early March, addresses concerns of deteriorating snow and ice travel conditions by April 10–15, and will assist users in field identification of the sex of the moose to avoid the inadvertent harvest of cows. By late March/early April, bull moose are starting to show the first signs of antler growth, thus alleviating the problem in the early March hunt of readily distinguishing bulls from cows. Increased daylight also aids in identification and provides more hours of harvest opportunity. Setting the dates of the "to be announced" season later in March and into early April in regulation should help alleviate the need for Special Actions.

The cow moose moratorium language is unnecessary, as the proposed harvest limit of "1 antlered bull" prohibits the harvest of a cow.

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NORTH SLOPE
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
3601 C STREET, #1030
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503-6199

DRAFT

Mr. Mike R. Fleagle, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, Mail Stop 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Fleagle:

This letter constitutes the 2009 Annual Report of the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The Council has permissive authority to submit the report under Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 311 *et seq.* The items brought forward are issues of concern.

Units 24 and 26 Moose
The Council is continually concerned with the moose population status in Units 24 and 26. Moose are an important subsistence resource for Kaktovik and Anaktuvuk Pass residents. The Council requests a report on the status of the population and including the impacts of predation, and habitat.

Unit 26 Muskox
Muskoxen are no longer hunted in Unit 26, because of the severe population decline. The Council is very concerned about this decline and requests an update on the Unit 26 muskox population to include possible causes of the decline.

Unit 26 Brown Bear
The Council has heard reports from subsistence users in the region that brown bears have been damaging cabins more frequently than in the past. The Council is concerned about this and requests an update on the Unit 26 Brown Bear population.

Fish Studies
The Council requests that more fish studies be done in various areas of the North Slope. It is concerned for the subsistence users because of the industrial developments and how they affect the residents' native grown fish.

Sheep
The Council is concerned about impacts from non subsistence users to the sheep population in Unit 26, especially in the areas around Arctic Village and Anaktuvuk Pass where sheep are an important subsistence resource. The Council requests an update on the sheep population in Unit 26.

REPRESENTING
*ANAKTUVUK PASS * ATQASUK * BARROW * KAKTOVIK *
* NUIQSUT * POINT HOPE * POINT LAY * WAINWRIGHT*

Migratory Bird Program
The Council requests that the Migratory Bird Program take time to give them an update personally either at their fall or winter meetings each year. Bird hunting is the residents' very life and they depend on the birds every spring season.

Arctic Region Councils
The Council requests that the Arctic Region (Units 22, 23 and 26) councils, the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, be allowed to have a joint meeting to discuss the impact of global warming in their respective regions. This would enhance their understanding of what is actually happening in each region of the far north.

The North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council appreciates the opportunity to provide the Board with information and to express concerns regarding regional subsistence issues.

Sincerely,

Harry K. Brower, Jr., Chair
North Slope Regional Advisory Council

cc: North Slope Council members
Interagency Staff Committee
Federal Subsistence Board
Ann Wilkinson, Division Chief
Administrative File

Fall 2010 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Window

August 30–October 15, 2010 current as of 11/03/09

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 22	*Aug. 23*	*Aug. 24*	*Aug. 25*	*Aug. 26*	*Aug. 27*	*Aug. 28*
		NS—Barrow				
Aug. 29	*Aug. 30* *WINDOW OPENS*	*Aug. 31*	*Sept. 1*	*Sept. 2*	*Sept. 3*	*Sept. 4*
			NWA—Kotzebue			
Sept. 5	*Sept. 6* ***HOLIDAY***	*Sept. 7*	*Sept. 8*	*Sept. 9*	*Sept. 10*	*Sept. 11*
Sept. 12	*Sept. 13*	*Sept. 14*	*Sept. 15*	*Sept. 16*	*Sept. 17*	*Sept. 18*
Sept. 19	*Sept. 20*	*Sept. 21*	*Sept. 22*	*Sept. 23*	*Sept. 24*	*Sept. 25*
		KA—TBA	**BB—Naknek**			
Sept. 26	*Sept. 27*	*Sept. 28*	*Sept. 29*	*Sept. 30* *END OF FY2010*	*Oct. 1*	*Oct. 2*
		SE—Sitka				
				YKD—TBA		
Oct. 3	*Oct. 4*	*Oct. 5*	*Oct. 6*	*Oct. 7*	*Oct. 8*	*Oct. 9*
		WI—McGrath				
Oct. 10	*Oct. 11* ***HOLIDAY***	*Oct. 12*	*Oct. 13*	*Oct. 14*	*Oct. 15* *WINDOW CLOSES*	*Oct. 16*
			EI—Central			
			SC—Cordova			
			SP—Nome			

Winter 2011 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Window

February 15–March 24, 2011 current as of 01/25/10

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 13	*Feb. 14*	*Feb. 15* *Window Opens*	*Feb. 16*	*Feb. 17*	*Feb. 18*	*Feb. 19*
Feb. 20	*Feb. 21* ***HOLIDAY***	*Feb. 22*	*Feb. 23*	*Feb. 24*	*Feb. 25*	*Feb. 26*
Feb. 27	*Feb. 28*	*Mar. 1*	*Mar. 2*	*Mar. 3*	*Mar. 4*	*Mar. 5*
Mar. 6	*Mar. 7*	*Mar. 8*	*Mar. 9*	*Mar. 10*	*Mar. 11*	*Mar. 12*
Mar. 13	*Mar. 14*	*Mar. 15*	*Mar. 16*	*Mar. 17*	*Mar. 18*	*Mar. 19*
Mar. 20	*Mar. 21*	*Mar. 22*	*Mar. 23*	*Mar. 24* *Window Closes*	*Mar. 25*	*Mar. 26*