



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
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Federal Subsistence Board News Release



Forest Service

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Federal Subsistence Board rejects request to close Federal public lands in Unit 26A and Unit 26B to caribou hunting by non-Federally qualified users

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) rejected Temporary Special Action Request WSA17-04, which requested that Federal public lands in Unit 26A and Unit 26B be closed to caribou hunting by non-Federally qualified users during the July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 regulatory year.

The Board concluded that recently enacted conservation actions by the Alaska Board of Game and Board for the Western Arctic, Teshekpuk, and Central Arctic Caribou Herds need to be given time to determine if they are effective in reducing the caribou harvest, and in slowing down or reversing the population declines in these caribou herds before additional closures are enacted. Closure of Federal public lands to non-Federally qualified users would not likely have as much of an effect as recent Alaska Board of Game actions that protect cows and reduce the overall caribou harvest. Much of the non-Federally qualified user harvest occurs on State lands, and a closure runs the risk of concentrating hunters onto State lands, which are adjacent to some villages, thereby increasing impacts to these communities.

The number of caribou harvested by non-Federally qualified users is not biologically significant for the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk Caribou Herds in Unit 26A and the potentially significant impact of non-Federally qualified user harvest from the Central Arctic Caribou Herd in Unit 26B has now been addressed by newly enacted State regulations for the 2017-2018 regulatory year. The Board recommends that these changes take effect in lieu of enacting additional regulations at this time.

Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at www.doi.gov/subsistence or by visiting www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

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