



Federal Subsistence Board News Release



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Forest Service

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Changes in Federal Moose and Caribou Hunting Regulations in Unit 13 Frequently asked questions on closure of Federal public lands to non-Federally qualified users.

On July 16, 2020, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted Temporary Wildlife Special Action WSA20-03 with modification to close the Federal public lands that are open to Federal subsistence hunting in Units 13A and 13B to moose and caribou hunting by non-Federally qualified users for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 seasons. This factsheet answers common questions and concerns about the closure.

1. Exactly where does the Federal closure apply?

The closure only applies to the Federal public lands in Units 13A and 13B that are open to Federal subsistence hunting. This includes the Federal subsistence hunt areas along the Richardson highway near Paxson and the Delta and Gulkana river corridors that are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The yellow/shaded areas in the map at the end of this factsheet depict the BLM lands in Units 13A and 13B open to Federal subsistence hunting, which now comprise the “closure area.” A more detailed map of the closed areas (cross-hatched areas) can be found at this link:

<https://www.blm.gov/documents/alaska/public-room/map/state-moose-and-caribou-hunt-restricted-areas-gmul3-and-b-2020-2022>

2. What activities are prohibited within the closure area?

Non-Federally qualified users (State hunters) may not hunt or harvest moose or caribou within the closure area. However, non-Federally qualified users, hunting under State regulations, may still travel through, camp, and hunt/trap for other species on Federal public lands within the closure area. The closure area also remains open to all other activities such as hiking, boating, wildlife viewing, etc.

3. Who is eligible to hunt moose and caribou on Federal public lands in Unit 13?

As of July 16, 2020, ONLY “Federally qualified subsistence users” are eligible to hunt moose and caribou on Federal public lands in the closure area. “Federally qualified subsistence users” are rural residents who have been determined by the Federal Subsistence Board to have customary and traditional use of moose and caribou in Unit 13. For customary and traditional use determinations see 50 CFR 100.24 or the Federal subsistence regulations book at:

https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/2018-20_wildlife_regs_book_final_web_3.pdf

4. How long will this closure be in effect?

The closure is effective for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 seasons, which extend from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022.

5. Can a non-Federally qualified user take moose and caribou on gravel bars along navigable waters below the “ordinary high water mark” when the adjacent uplands are Federal public lands?

When the adjacent uplands are Federal public lands, the strip of land—often a gravel or mud bar—between the edge of a river and the “ordinary high water mark” is open in some areas to moose and caribou hunting by non-Federally qualified users. For the Unit 13 closure area, non-Federally qualified users are allowed to take moose and caribou between the edge of the river and the ordinary high water mark along navigable waters on BLM lands, including the Delta and Gulkana Rivers.

PLEASE NOTE: While non-Federally qualified users are allowed to take moose and caribou between the edge of a river and the ordinary high water mark, both the hunter AND the caribou must be *above* the actual water line but *below* the ordinary high water mark for the harvest to be legal. **Hunters are strongly urged to use caution and extremely good judgment if hunting in this narrow strip of land to avoid the risk of violating the law.**

6. How is “ordinary high water mark” defined?

The ordinary high water mark means “that line on the shore established by the fluctuations of water and indicated by physical characteristics such as a clear, natural line impressed on the bank, shelving, changes in the character of soil, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, the presence of litter and debris, or other appropriate means that consider the characteristics of the surrounding areas” (33 CFR 328.3).

7. Can a Federally qualified subsistence user hunt in the closure area with only a State registration permit?

No, Federal registration permits are required to hunt moose (FM1301) and caribou (FC1302) under Federal subsistence regulations in Unit 13. The closure area is closed to all moose and caribou hunting under State regulations.

8. Why did the Board enact this closure?

Similar to Emergency Orders issued by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Federal Subsistence Management Program can make in-season, out-of-cycle, temporary regulation changes through the Special Action process. An individual submitted special action request asking the Board to close Federal public lands in Unit 13 to the hunting of moose and caribou by non-Federally qualified users for the 2020/21 season. The Board acted on the request at a public meeting held by teleconference July 16, 2020. The Board approved a closure in Units 13A and 13B only, for the 2020-2022 seasons due to necessity for reasons of public safety and continuation of subsistence uses. The Board limited the closure Units 13A and 13B because this is the area where most overcrowding, disruption of hunts, and serious safety concerns have occurred.

9. Who should I contact if I have further questions about this closure?

Please contact the Office of Subsistence Management at (907) 786-3888, (800) 478-1456 or Subsistence@fws.gov. You can also contact the BLM Glennallen Field Office at (907) 822-3217.

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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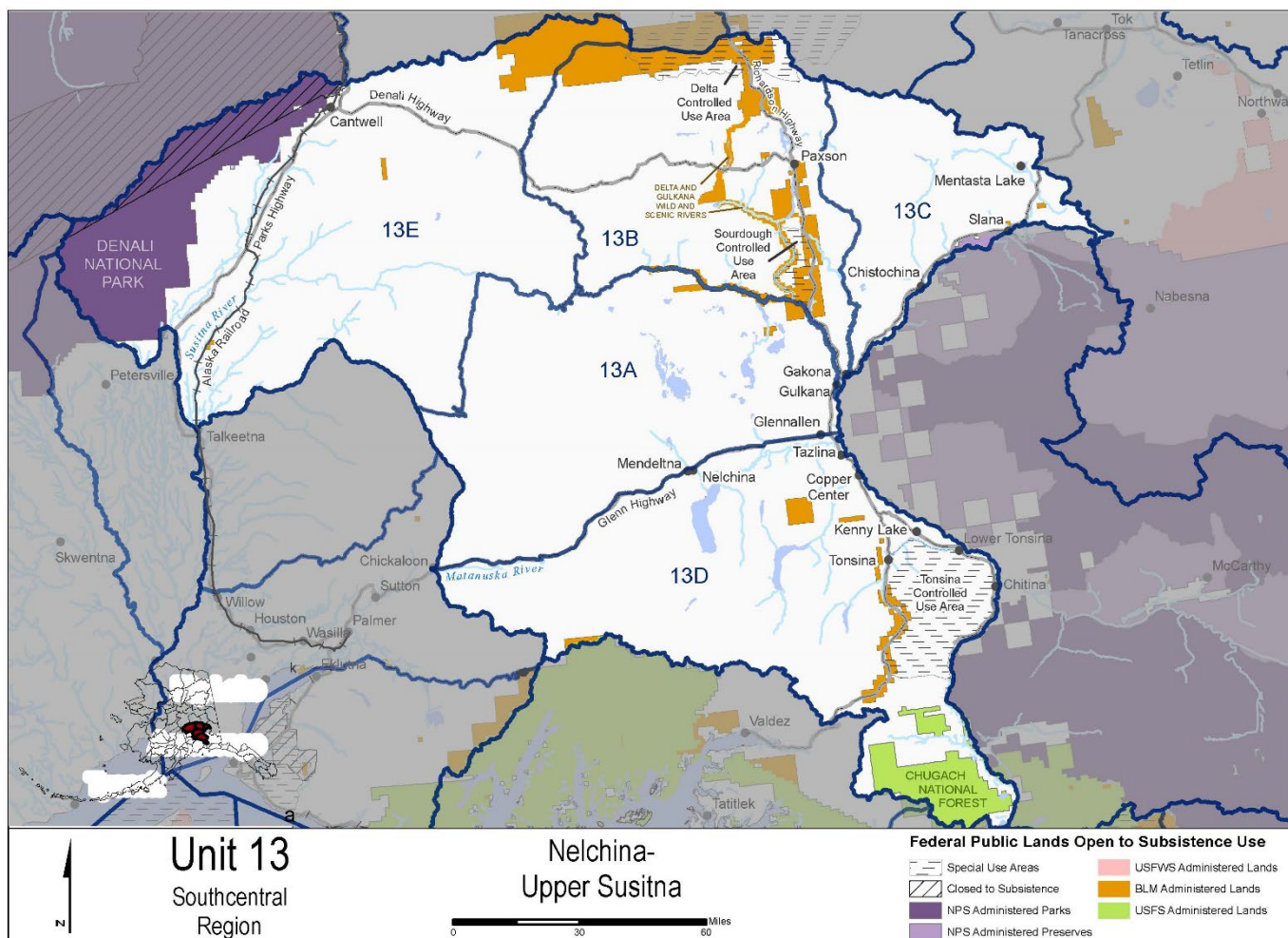


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