

SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Support WSA21-01a. The Council is very concerned about the herd's population decline as it seems to be declining much faster than it has in the past. The special action request will help protect the herd during this upcoming hunting season and there are few other ways to meaningfully conserve the herd, while also preserving the continuation of subsistence uses. The Council noted that if only Federal public lands in Unit 23 were closed, it would just push non-local hunters to the North Slope and adjacent areas. They supported a more unified approach in the closure.

The Council also acknowledged that decreasing cow harvest is important for the herd's conservation and that sacrifices in harvest will need to be made, but more education across the region is needed to raise awareness of the current status of the herd. The Council stressed that caribou are a critical subsistence resources and discussed the need for restrictions on State lands as well as possibly on Federally qualified subsistence users. They also asked law enforcement and federal agencies listen to the local people who live in the area year-round.

North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Support WSA21-01a **as modified by OSM** (OSM option #1), to close caribou hunting to non-Federally qualified users on BLM-managed lands between the Noatak and Kobuk Rivers and all of Noatak National Preserve in Unit 23 only August 1 to September 30, 2022 (**Map 7**).

The Council stated that the caribou population decline warrants intervention through a directed closure in Unit 23, but a closure is not needed in Unit 26A, as caribou have come around communities in the unit, and people have been able to meet their subsistence needs in the North Slope region. The Council supports their neighbors in the Northwest Arctic because of the herd decline and non-resident hunters coming in in front of the herd and changing migration routes directly affecting communities in Unit 23. However, as originally submitted, the request was very sweeping in its inclusion of 26A, which is beyond what's needed at this time. The Council does not want to arbitrarily close a region if it is not warranted.

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Support WSA21-01a. The Council agreed with and supported the Northwest Arctic Council, their neighbors to the north who are much closer to the caribou.

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Defer to home regions. The Council stated that this issue falls outside of their region. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd has not been coming to the Western Interior region. However, the Council noted that there should be better mapping of where the herd is going, so that local users are aware. Additionally, there should be no hunting of cows during migration.

INTERAGENCY STAFF COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The ISC acknowledges the importance of concerns voiced by Federally qualified subsistence users in Units 23 and 26A regarding food security and the continuation of subsistence uses. The ISC further acknowledges the traditional ecological knowledge of local people who live in close proximity to the caribou herds and steward the land and resources. To continue to inform the situation, we recommend collaborative cross-agency efforts to better understand the patterns and external impacts to migration in the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH). WSA21-01 addresses food security concerns in the short-term; the ISC believes that long-term solutions need to be developed as well and will support such efforts. We further encourage that co-equal attention be given to traditional knowledge and western science in understanding and managing subsistence resources.

It is clear from public testimony gathered at Regional Advisory Council meetings and at the public hearings for WSA21-01a that many Federally qualified subsistence users living in Unit 23 have not been able to meet their subsistence needs with respect to caribou harvest. The recent 24% decline in the WACH population between 2019 and 2021 may be contributing to this lack of caribou availability and the WACH Working Group voted to change the herd's management status to the "preservative declining" category in response to this decline. Under this management regime, closure of some Federal public lands may be warranted.

The long-term effects of aircraft and non-local hunting activity on caribou migration remain unclear, though short-term effects on individual harvest success by Federally qualified subsistence users is occurring based on local testimony. There are likely multiple factors contributing to the alteration of the WACH migratory route and timing, but in times of shortage and when the continuation of subsistence uses of a resource is being impacted, the Board is obligated to consider restrictions to non-Federally qualified users as specified in ANILCA Section 815(3). Even though caribou harvest by non-Federally qualified users is small compared to overall harvest of the WACH, rural residents of Unit 23 have repeatedly testified that placement of hunters along migratory routes and harvest of lead animals are impacting herd migration, independent of the overall magnitude of this harvest.

Most of the harvest by non-Federally qualified users, along with much of the user conflicts occur within the Noatak National Preserve in Unit 23. If the Board decides to implement additional closures, it may be prudent to focus on this area, rather than on all Federal lands in Units 23 and 26A to best address the concerns identified by the proponent of the special action request, and to reduce hunting pressure by non-Federally qualified users on nearby State lands.

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME COMMENTS



THE STATE
of ALASKA
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

DATE: January 24, 2022

PHONE: 267-2190

FROM: Ben Mulligan ^{BJM}
Deputy Commissioner

SUBJECT: Temporary Special
Action WSA21-01

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has reviewed Wildlife Special Action 21-01 submitted by the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requesting that federal public lands in Game Management Unit (GMU) 23 and 26A be closed to non-federally qualified users (NFQU) for caribou and moose hunting for August and September 2021 and adamantly **OPPOSES** this special action request because the rationale given does not meet the requirements for such a closure under the provisions of Section 8 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) for either the conservation of healthy populations of moose and caribou or for the continuation of subsistence uses of such populations. Any approval of the proposed closure would be viewed as a violation of federal law, and we urge the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) to follow the law and reject this proposal. If the objective is, as the requestor has stated, to regulate the use of aircraft for caribou hunting, then a more appropriate avenue would be to submit a proposal to the Alaska Board of Game as has been done in the past.

The State of Alaska is a sovereign state, which has compelling interest in the management, conservation, and regulation of all fish and wildlife and other natural resources within its jurisdiction, for sustained yield and the maximum use and benefit of the Alaskan people. Under Alaska Constitution Article 8 and AS 16.05.020, the State directly manages fish, wildlife, and habitat through ADF&G. Furthermore, State law (AS 16.05.258) ensures the state provides for subsistence use. ANILCA requires the FSB to cooperate with ADF&G, except as otherwise provided by federal law, in managing subsistence activities on public lands and protecting the continued viability of wild renewable resources in Alaska. Any action the FSB takes to unjustly close hunting opportunities for NFQUs in 23 and 26A will have a significant adverse impact on the State's ability to manage game populations, including those on federal lands within its borders. In Section 802, Congress provided that subsistence uses of fish and wildlife shall be the priority consumptive uses for rural residents only, "when it is necessary to restrict taking in order to assure continued viability of a fish or wildlife population or the continuation of subsistence uses of that population for subsistence purposes." In Section 815, Congress directed that nothing in Title 8 of ANILCA is to be construed as, "authorizing a restriction on the taking of fish and wildlife for nonsubsistence uses on the public lands...unless necessary for the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife, for the reasons set forth in Section 816 of this title, to continue subsistence uses of

such populations, or pursuant to other applicable law...” Under these provisions we see no justification for the approval of such a request under the before mentioned criteria found in ANILCA.

The closure previously established in federal regulations, along with the current controlled use areas established in state regulations, were the appropriate mechanisms to address the concerns that have been expressed in the past as well as in this special action request. These restrictions combined with harvest restrictions imposed under both state and federal hunting regulations ensure that NFQUs are spatially separated from FQUs in areas frequented by FQUs. Almost all of the NFQUs are flown in to hunting locations that are not accessible to FQUs, the large majority of whom prefer to hunt from boats. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT), the state’s peace officers charged with enforcing its fish and wildlife laws and regulations, recently informed ADF&G that they have not observed any systemic user conflicts. Reports from state law enforcement have indicated they never observe FQUs in the field more than a few hundred yards from their boat or near NFQUs who predominantly utilize aircraft to travel to their desired hunting area. The two user groups are never within proximity to one another.

With concerns from local residents stating that NFQUs are deflecting the Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) migration by not letting the lead cows pass by before harvesting any caribou and that guides and transporters traversing the landscape by aircraft are upsetting migration, it would once again be appropriate for proposals to be submitted similar to those in the past to address these specific concerns instead of seeking a complete closure of hunting by all NFQUs in this area. From harvest records only a handful of cows are harvested by NFQUs (non-local Alaska residents) and there is no way to confirm any of these cows are the lead caribou, and even if they were with such a small number of cows being harvested it is unlikely to cause a change in migration timing. The AWT has received complaints of low-flying aircraft during the last two hunting seasons. However, none of them have been found to be tied to any actual harassment or deflection of caribou. Even when video was taken of aircraft there appeared to be no issues with the pilot’s behavior. The aircraft was flying at an adequate height (above 500 ft) and traveling in a straight line to its destination. During their near-daily patrol flights, AWT observations have been that caribou are, by and large, unresponsive to aircraft flying overhead. Occasionally they will startle and run for a few seconds until the plane passes, at which point they stop running and resume grazing. This is corroborated by a study published by Fullman et al. (2017) that found that caribou may be temporarily affected by hunters, but deflections of herd migration had not been detected.

The harvest by NFQUs of caribou in the WAH also needs to be considered. Based on previous harvest trends, it is reasonable to anticipate that NFQUs will take roughly 350 caribou, almost all bulls, out of a herd of 188,000 animals. This represents only .19 percent of the total population or just 3 percent of the estimated harvestable surplus of 11,300 caribou for the 2022-23 season, which is still on the upper end of the range of the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) of 8,000-12,000 caribou. (Note: this ANS is for the Western Arctic and the Teshekpuk herd combined.) We also know that NFQUs are overwhelmingly harvesting bull caribou and the current bull to cow ratio found during the 2021 survey was 47:100 which is well above the minimum ratio we like to see of 30:100. Given this information, the anticipated NFQU harvest will not threaten the biological health of the herd or have an impact on the harvestable surplus.

The unintended consequences of acting on this proposed closure will be felt far and wide. If federal lands are closed to NFQUs then those Alaskans who wish to hunt this area, including many who hail from local communities, will only be able to utilize State lands or utilize those navigable waters hunting below the ordinary high-water mark where the state has jurisdiction. The vast majority of the lands in GMU 26A are either managed by the Bureau of Land Management or by the National Park Service and much of the state managed lands are located around North Slope communities. It is quite likely that closing federal lands to moose and caribou hunting will concentrate NFQUs on state managed lands near those communities or move NFQUs to adjacent GMUs where such a closure does not exist.

The economic ripples will be felt locally and throughout the state as well. Alaskans, non-residents, guides, and transporters all spend money at a variety of businesses in Alaska located both in urban and rural communities.

Background

Caribou

The Western Arctic Herd (WAH) and the Teshekpuk Herd (TCH) are the two main caribou herds found within GMUs 23 and 26A. In general, the WAH may be found within both GMUs during the proposed closure period, with the majority located in GMU 23. The TCH is primarily found in GMU 26A during this timeframe.

Western Arctic Caribou Herd

The WAH is the largest of the two herds and was estimated at 244,000 animals in 2019, down slightly from the 2017 estimate of 259,000 and up from the previous low of 201,000 (2016). The most recent estimate completed in 2021 indicates a decline to 188,000. (Figure 1). Between 2003 and 2016 the WAH experienced a period of steep population decline falling from the recorded high of 490,000. The Intensive Management (IM) population objective is 200,000 caribou and the two herds share a combined ANS of 8,000-12,000. The lack of growth and apparent recent decline is largely attributed to below average adult female survival which occurred between 2017 and 2020. The average survival for the 3-year period was 73% compared to the long-term average of 81 % (1985-2020). Short yearling recruitment and calving rates have both been at or above the long-term averages for the herd. Average short-yearling recruitment rate between 2018 and 2021 was 17:100 (short-yearlings: adults) which matches the long-term average of 17:100 since 1998. The calving rate in 2021 is 68%, which is consistent with the long-term average between 1992 and 2021. These metrics combined with the most recent population estimates seem to indicate the WAH population is declining. Skoog (1968) coined the phrase “center of habitation” to explain the range expansion and contraction that appears to be linked to increases and decreases in caribou populations. This phenomenon and the understanding that the distribution of the WAH varies considerably from season to season (Figure 2) and year to year (figure 3) has the potential to directly impact accessibility for harvest. An analysis of the oral histories and historical documentation indicate that variation in fall migration patterns and wintering areas for the WAH has occurred throughout recorded history. A publication by the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge containing oral histories about “caribou, reindeer and life as they knew it” Ruby Ayaqin Foster said of the time before caribou, “Around my time there were no caribou. We just ate fish, ptarmigan, and rabbit that is all. There were no caribou around during that time-absolutely none.” Ben Sampson the Guest Elder who spoke during the 2018 Western Arctic Herd Working Group said, “in the 1960’s in Selawik people had just started to harvest caribou. “In the 1960’s-1970’s I would go with my uncles by dog team over to the Noatak area and hunt for a couple of weeks. It took two days to get there and there were lots of good caribou.” The important thing to understand is that caribou movements are subject to change and understanding the drivers of that change is challenging.

In a recent analysis of fall migration cues which looked at the drivers of fall migration for the WAH. Cameron et al (2021) concluded that the most significant factors influencing fall movements are temperature and snow depth. Findings noted that the average fall temperatures have increased by 7.5 °F for Kotzebue over the last 50 years and the first snowfall is arriving 2-3 weeks later. With these warming conditions caribou are moving later in the year and in some cases wintering far north of wintering areas that were commonly used in the past.

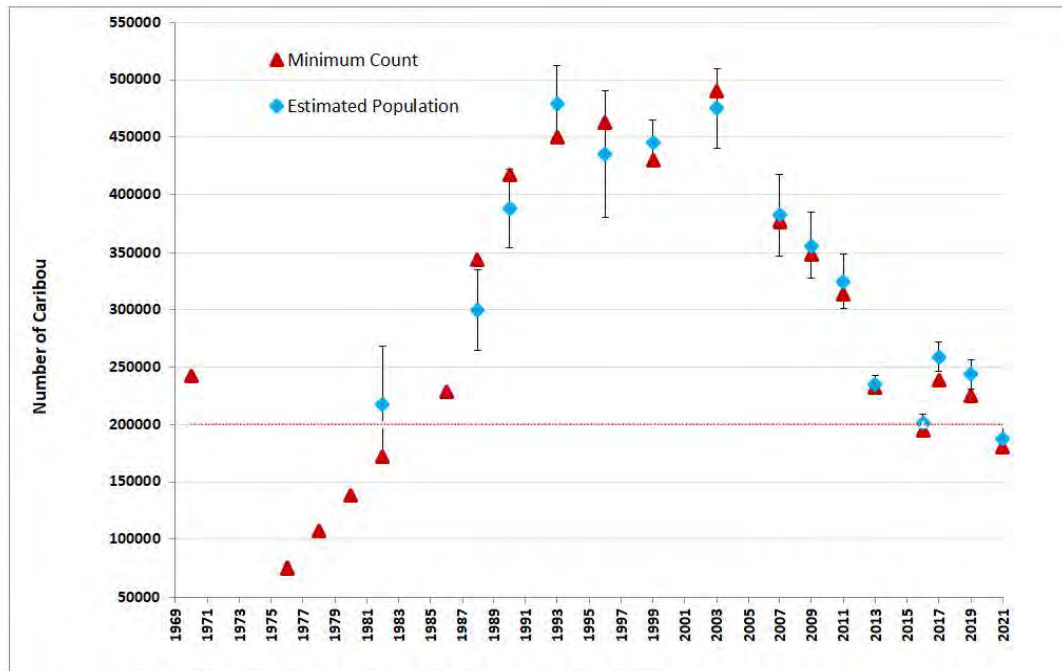


Figure 1. Population estimates and minimum counts for the WAH 1970-2021.

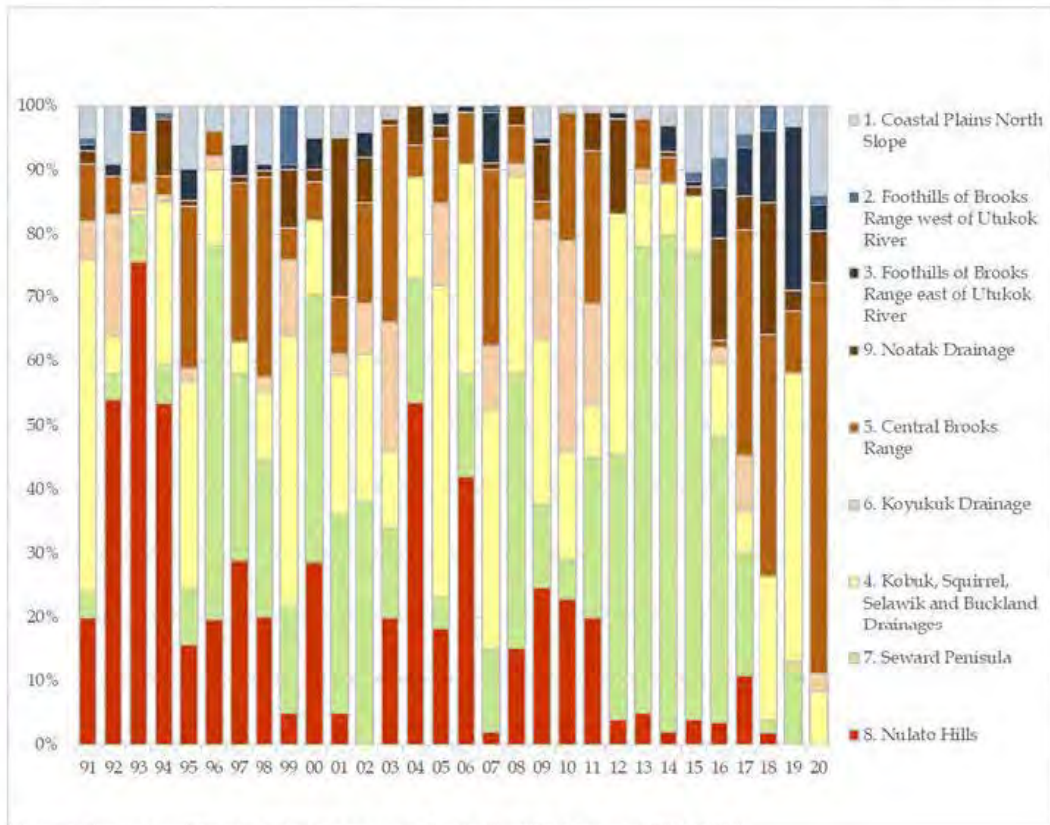


Figure 2. Annual variation in winter range occupation for the WAH by year (1992-2020)

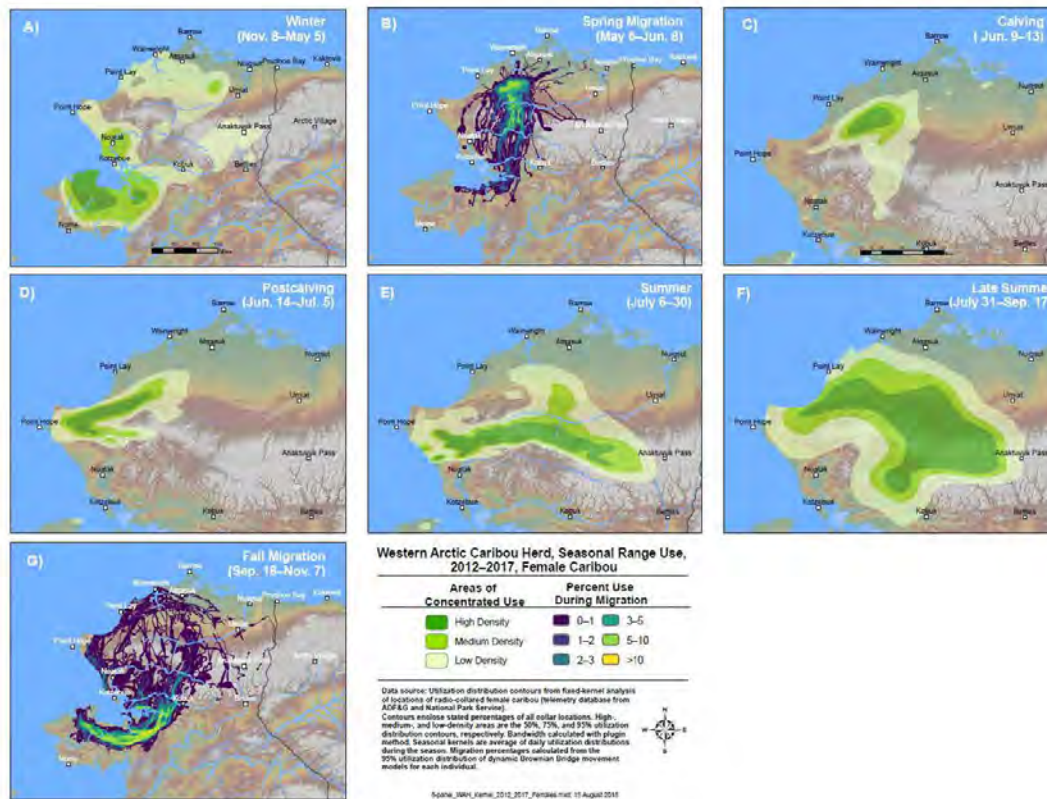


Figure 3. Seasonal distribution of WAH female caribou 2012-2017.

Teshkepuk Caribou Herd

ADF&G manages the TCH with an intensive management objective of 15,000-28,000 caribou and a harvest of 900-2,800 (Figure 3). These intensive management objectives are independent of the WAH objectives. The current TCH population estimate is 56,000 caribou and is based on the 2017 photocensus. The population is well above intensive management objectives and the amount of harvest that occurs from non-federally qualified subsistence users is minimal compared to harvest by local residents.

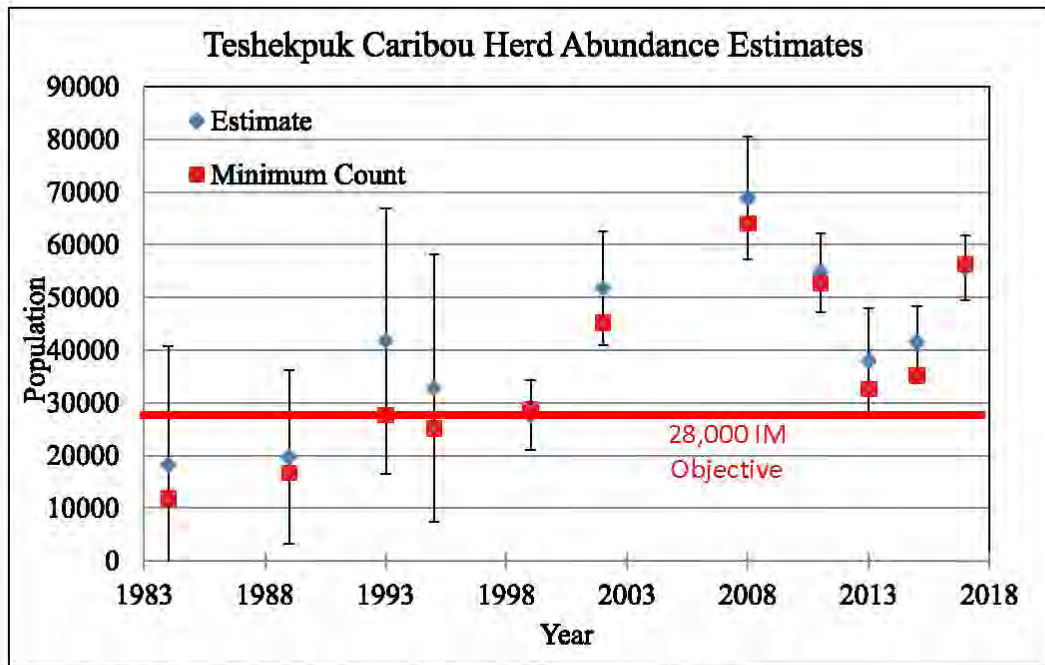


Figure 3. Teshekpuk caribou herd abundance estimates and minimum counts 1984-2017.

Caribou distribution in general is variable seasonally and annually. It is common for the TCH to overwinter on the North Slope with some portion of the herd migrating towards Anaktuvuk Pass in the fall or early winter (Figure 4). During the 2021 spring short-yearling recruitment survey 31 collars were located and a corresponding 3,073 caribou were surveyed. There were 447 calves and 2,596 adults observed, resulting in an estimated 15% recruitment rate. This recruitment rate is within the long-term range of recruitment observed from 1990-2020. The most recent fall composition survey was conducted in 2016 with 28 bulls:100 cows (low) and 48 calves:100 cows (high). During the summer 2021 parturition survey, 78 females ages 3 and older were observed and 41 were parturient. A total of 28 (36%) live calves were observed at heel. The 78 parturient caribou observed results in an estimated parturition rate of 52%, which is well below the average of 68% (2010-2020). Adult female mortality from 2020-2021 was ~10%, which is 5% lower than 15% for the 27-year average (1990-2017).

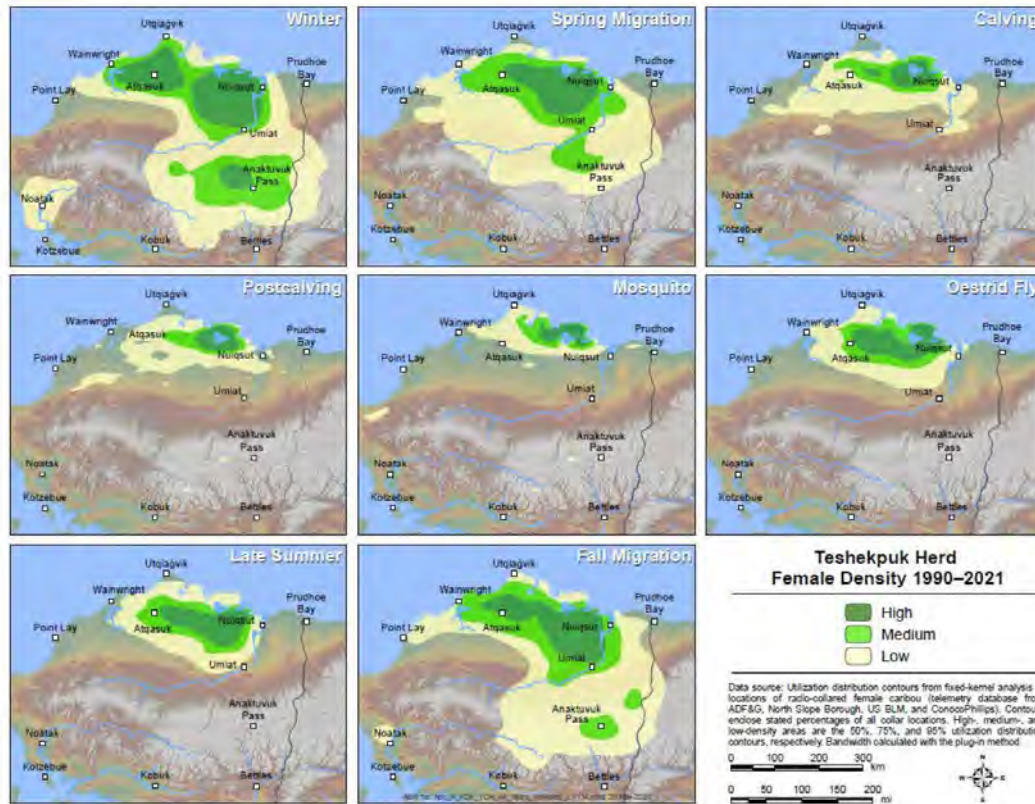


Figure 4. Seasonal distribution of female TCH 2012-2021.

Moose

GMU 23

Moose began appearing within GMU 23 in the mid-20th century as their range expanded eastward from the interior of the state. The region saw a continued increase in moose populations through the late 1980s; however, a series of severe winters and heavy spring flooding through the early 1990s resulted in high adult mortality and diminished calf recruitment. Higher predator densities and an increase in moose harvest, due to low numbers of over-wintering caribou, likely compounded these weather effects and the GMU's moose population began to stabilize, then decline. Moose densities throughout the region remained low.

Through the late 1990s and early 2000s all moose harvest in GMU 23 was conducted under the state's general moose harvest ticket. In 2000 a positive C&T finding was determined for moose within the GMU and in 2002 an ANS of 325-400 moose was established with a population objective of 3,500-9,000. It should be noted that the ANS finding for moose was determined at a time when caribou were generally available to most communities at least some point of the year; changing caribou migrations and distributions may influence moose harvest if local residents are unable to acquire locally preferred caribou.

At the 2003 Board of Game (BOG) meeting, a resident registration hunt (RM880) and a series of non-resident draw hunts (DM871-877) were established for GMU 23 moose. The implementation of these hunts, and changes in season dates, were intended to reduce and distribute moose harvest within the GMU, as well as address user conflicts that had arisen in the area. In Regulatory Year (RY) 04 the registration permit was introduced, while the non-resident draw permits were initiated in RY05 with permit limits set at the mean number of non-resident moose harvested between RY00-RY04. This hunt structure, with various season changes, persisted through RY16 at which point biologists determined that continued population declines warranted a reduction in harvest and a move to bull-only harvest. In January of 2017, the board adopted an amended proposal to change the RM880 permit to one antlered bull, and state biologists closed the non-resident draw hunts.

For the 2021 regulatory year, both the RM880 registration hunt and the general harvest ticket may be used to harvest moose within GMU 23. The RM880 permit allows for the harvest of one antlered bull between July 1- December 31 in GMU 23 north of, and including, the Singoalik River drainage, and between August 1- December 31 in the remainder of GMU 23. RM880 permits are only available for pickup in person from license vendors in GMU 23 communities from June 1-July 15. Alternatively, residents may harvest one bull with 50-inch antlers or with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side, under the State's general harvest ticket between September 1-September 20. Currently, Alaskan residents wishing to hunt on federal land must possess either an RM880 or a general harvest ticket. Moose hunting on Cape Krusenstern National Monument and Kobuk Valley National Park is limited to residents of GMU 23 and must be conducted under the federal subsistence regulations. Federal subsistence seasons are from August 1-December 31 and allow for the take of one antlered bull.

GMU 26A

The 2021 minimum count identified 438 moose with 20% short yearlings on the Colville moose population. The Colville moose population is currently on the lower end of their population range (Figure 5). Moose are sparsely distributed throughout the Colville River and its tributaries with a few on outlying rivers (Figure 6). The densest portions of the population are on the Anaktuvuk, Colville and Chandler rivers (Figure 6).

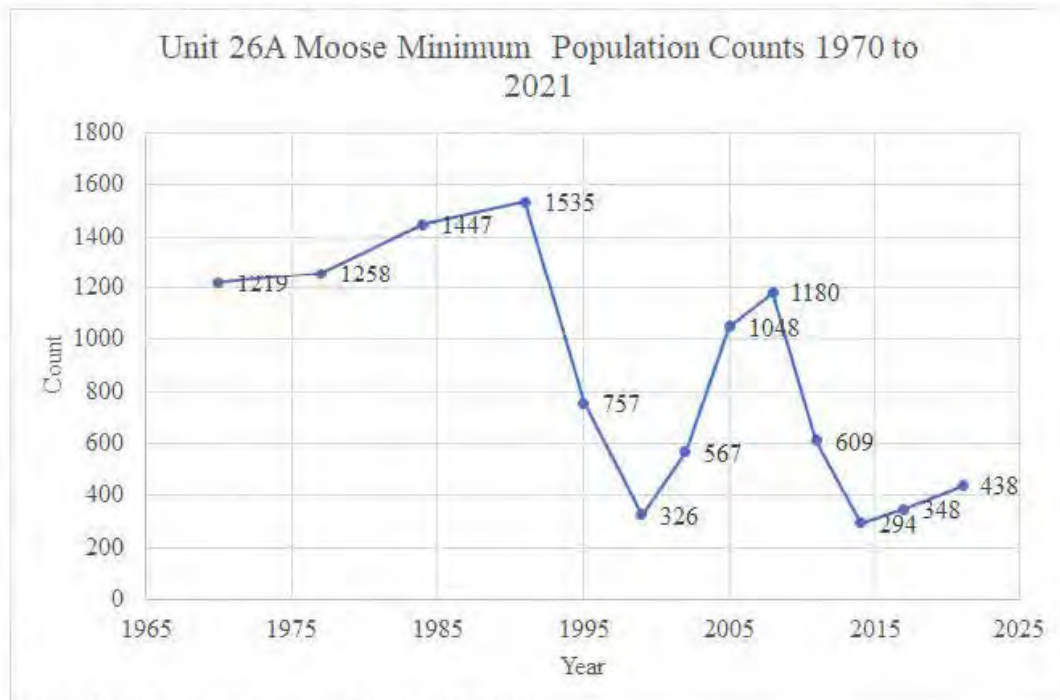


Figure 5. Colville moose minimum count survey data 1970-2021.



Figure 6. Combined moose census (minimum count) surveys 2002, 2005, 2014, and 2017. Darker red areas indicate denser moose distribution and lighter pink areas indicate lower densities of moose on the outer edges of their range.

Historical Regulatory Actions

Caribou

Conflict between local and non-local users of the WAH has been a topic of considerable discussion in GMU 23 since at least the early 1980s. Increasingly later fall caribou movements have contributed to escalated concerns throughout the region. These changes in movement patterns have reduced the reliability of caribou as a source of meat for GMU 23 residents who were previously accustomed to predictable fall time hunting patterns along the Kobuk River. GMU 23 residents frequently reported that airplane hunting activities in the upper Noatak are responsible for the lack of caribou migrating southward and actions stemming from these concerns have led to a suite of both state and federal regulations.

Beginning in 1985 local councils appealed to the regulatory process for relief from competition with aircraft supported caribou hunters. The first measure was granted in 1988 in response to a proposal from the Kotzebue Fish and Game Advisory Committee to the BoG which created the Noatak CUA. The new CUA closed a corridor of the Noatak River (5 miles on either side, between the Kugururok River and Sapun Creek) to the use of aircraft in any manner, for big game hunting between August 20 and September 20. Spatial and temporal adjustments to the CUA have taken place in the intervening years, with the current regulations closing the corridor extending five miles on either side of, and including, the

Noatak River beginning at the Agashashok River, and extending upstream to the mouth of the Nimiuktuk River (Figure 7). The area is closed from August 15 – September 30 to the use of aircraft in any manner for big game hunting, including transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, and/or parts of big game.

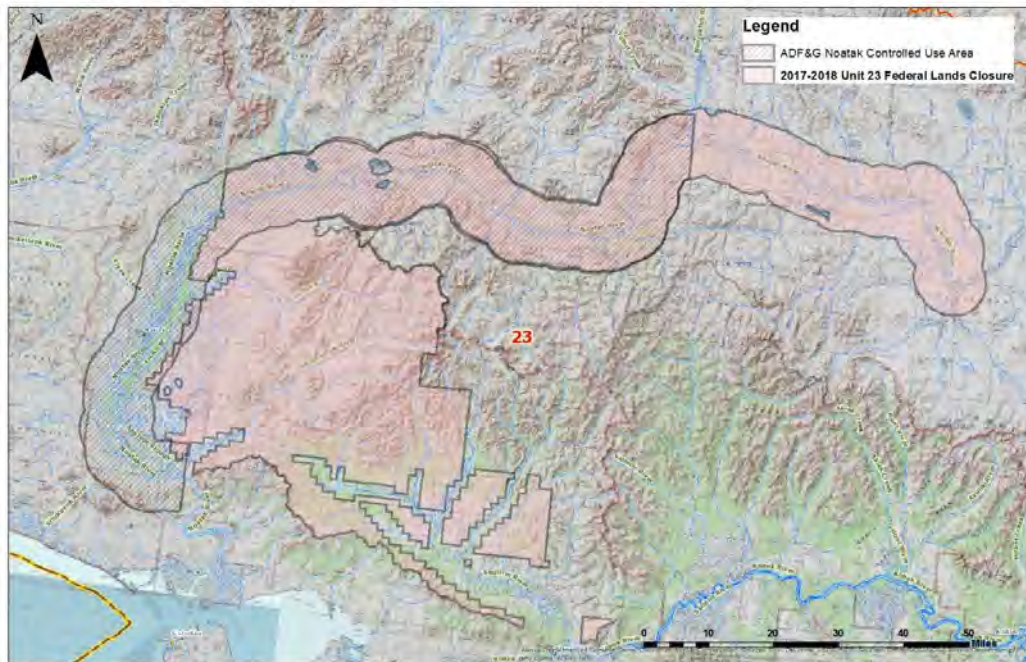


Figure 7. Fall caribou hunting restrictions, ADF&G Noatak CUA and Federal lands closed to NFQUs (red), closed areas along the Noatak River include a 5-mile buffer on either side of the river.

Perhaps the most notable regulatory event that has taken place in recent years (WSA 16-01) was approved by the FSB in 2016, and which closed all federal lands to NFQUs for the purpose of caribou hunting in the fall of 2016. This decision was in response to a request from the Northwest Arctic Regional Subsistence Advisory Council (NWARAC) and was followed up by an identical special action request (WSA17-03) the following year. WSA17-03 was amended from its original extent and became a targeted closure which effectively extended the Noatak CUA to the Cutler River and added those federal lands within the Squirrel River drainage (Figure 7). In 2018, WP18-46 established the permanent closure, but caribou movements have continued to frustrate local users who invest time and financial resources in travel to previously fruitful areas to wait on caribou that may or may not arrive.

The controlled use area for GMU 26A was established in RY06-07 and concerned the lands surrounding Anaktuvuk Pass. This area is closed from August 15 - October 15 to the use of aircraft for caribou hunting, including the transportation of caribou hunters, their hunting gear, and/or parts of caribou. However, this does not apply to the transportation of caribou hunters, their gear, or caribou parts by aircraft between publicly owned airports in the controlled use area.

Management Strategies

Caribou**Unit 23—Caribou**

23, north of and including Singoalik River drainage	Residents—Five caribou per day by permit available online at http://hunt.alaska.gov or in person in Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, and at license vendors in Units 23 and 26A beginning June 22.	Bulls	RC907	No closed season
	Nonresidents—One bull		HT	Aug. 1-Sept. 30
23 remainder	Residents—Five caribou per day by permit available online at http://hunt.alaska.gov or in person in Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, and at license vendors in Units 23 and 26A beginning June 22.	Bulls	RC907	No closed season
		Cows	RC907	Jul. 15-Apr. 30
	Nonresidents—One bull		HT	Sept. 1-Mar. 31
			HT	Aug. 1-Sept. 30

Unit 26A—Caribou

26A, the Colville River drainage upstream from the Anaktuvuk River, and drainages of the Chukchi Sea south and west of, and including the Utukok River drainage	Residents—Five caribou per day by permit available online at http://hunt.alaska.gov or in person in Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, and at license vendors in Units 23 and 26A beginning June 22.	Bulls	RC907	July 1-Oct. 14 Feb. 1-June 30
	Nonresidents—One bull		HT	July 15-Sept. 30
26A remainder	Residents—Five bulls per day by permit available online at http://hunt.alaska.gov or in person in Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, and at license vendors in Units 23 and 26A beginning June 22.		RC907	July 1-July 15 Mar. 16-June 30
	Residents—Five caribou per day, three of which may be cows; cows with calves may not be taken. Permits available online at http://hunt.alaska.gov or in person in Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, and at license vendors in Units 23 and 26A beginning June 22.		RC907	July 16-Oct. 15

Residents—Three cows per day by permit available online at <http://hunt.alaska.gov> or in person in Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, and at license vendors in Units 23 and 26A beginning June 22.

RC907 Oct. 16-Dec. 31

Residents—Five caribou per day, three of which may be cows. Permits available online at <http://hunt.alaska.gov> or in person in Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, and at license vendors in Units 23 and 26A beginning June 22.

RC907 Jan. 1-Mar. 15

Nonresidents—One bull

HT July 15-Sept. 30

Annual harvest has been estimated at approximately 12,000 for the WAH and 3,500 for the TCH using household harvest survey data (ADF&G Subsistence Division); survey results include caribou location data expressed as “availability.” Our best understanding of caribou harvest for both herds indicates that harvest has exceeded the combined WAH/TCH ANS of 8-12,000 for at least the past 25 years. However, harvest estimates acquired through this approach are unable to capture short-term variations in harvest and that the actual WAH harvest might be lower since at least 2018 due to a lack of availability. A better understanding of resident harvest is imperative if we are to understand short term changes and potential implications. As an attempt to address this data gap the RC907 caribou registration permit was adopted by the BOG in 2017 as a tool to understand caribou harvest in a timelier manner. The Department has undergone extensive efforts since that time to institute the permit and has experienced mixed success. Conservative estimates indicate that reported harvest on the RC907 permit in GMU 23 is approximately 10% of actual harvest and ADF&G continues to make efforts to improve that reporting rate.

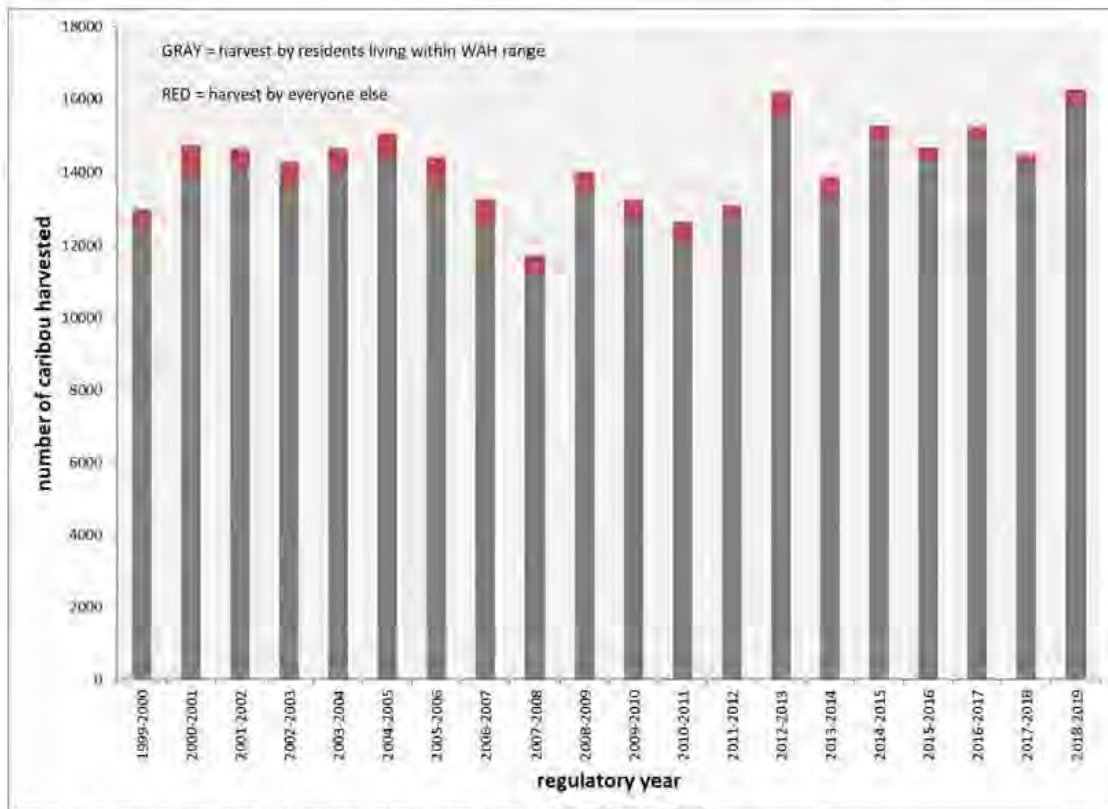


Figure 8. Historical harvest of WAH by those living within its range and everyone else.

According to the RC907 permit returns, in the WAH, NFQU (Alaska residents) harvested 80 in 2018, 56 in 2019, and 26 in 2020 for an average of 64/year. Non-residents harvested 121 in 2017, 219 in 2018, and 297 in 2019 for an average of 212/year.

Harvest data from RC907 permit returns for GMU 26A indicate harvest by Alaska resident NFQUs totaled 0 caribou in 2017, 31 caribou in 2018, and 8 caribou in 2019 for an average harvest of 13 per year over the last three years. Non-resident harvest on RC907 permit returns ranged from 10-40 caribou per year. Combined average harvest for NFQUs for both herds between 2017 and 2019 was between 300 and 350 caribou, which equates to approximately 2.5% of total harvest.

Moose

GMU 23

GMU 23 is divided into six population survey areas: Upper Noatak, Lower Noatak, Upper Kobuk, Lower Kobuk, Selawik, and Northern Seward Peninsula. A single area is surveyed each year, on rotation, which results in a GMU-wide moose abundance estimate that spans multiple years (Table 1). The current population estimate for GMU 23 is 5,600 moose (2010-2019) and represents an extrapolated estimate that accounts for unsurveyed land. Moose densities within the GMU range from 0.03-0.22 adults/mi² and spring recruitment ranges from 12-23% short yearlings. The GMU 23 moose population is managed at a 6% harvest rate, with a harvest objective of 210-920 moose with a harvestable surplus of

334 moose. The overall 5-year average reported harvest is 116 moose (2016-2020). FQU have accounted for 69-86% of harvest between 2016 and 2020 (Figure 8) with NFQU accounting for 14-31% over the same period. Residency of RM880 permit holders has seen a gradual shift over the last 5 years, with an increasing number of permits issued to FQU residents and a decreasing number to NFQU residents (figures 9 and 10). Participation under the general harvest ticket hunt has decreased overall from 69 hunters in RY16 to 31 in RY20 (Figure 12).

Table 1. Unit 23 spring geospatial moose survey results, 2009-2021 (surveys conducted cooperatively by ADFG, NPS, USFWS and BLM).

Area	Year	Size (mi ²)	Survey estimate (Nr.)				Density (Nr. /mi ²)		Calves: 100 Adults
			Adults	Calves	Total ^a	90% CI ^b	Adult	Total	
Selawik	2011	6559	1569	170	1739	±18	0.24	0.27	11
Selawik	2016	6559	826	114	940	±12	.13	.14	14
Selawik	2021	6559	942	93	1036	±16	0.14	0.16	10
Lower Noatak	2013	6404.5	1349	143	1,478	±19	0.21	0.23	11
Lower Noatak	2018	6404.5	759	101	866	±11	0.12	0.14	13
Upper Noatak	2010	4485.6	136	16	152	±18	0.03	0.03	12
N. Seward Peninsula	2009	5773.2	904	74	966	±27	0.16	0.17	8
N. Seward Peninsula	2015	5773.2	540	80	617	±14	0.09	0.11	15
Upper Kobuk	2014	5056.8	680	49	727	±24	0.13	0.14	7
Upper Kobuk	2019	5056.8	265	63	601	±16	0.05	0.12	23
Lower Kobuk-Squirrel	2012	5338	2363	181	2546	±17	0.44	0.48	8
Lower Kobuk-Squirrel	2017	5338	1175	176	1346	±16	0.22	0.25	15

^aGenerated as Total Moose in the geospatial model and therefore, does not usually equal the sum of adults and calves.

^bExpressed as a percentage of the estimate.

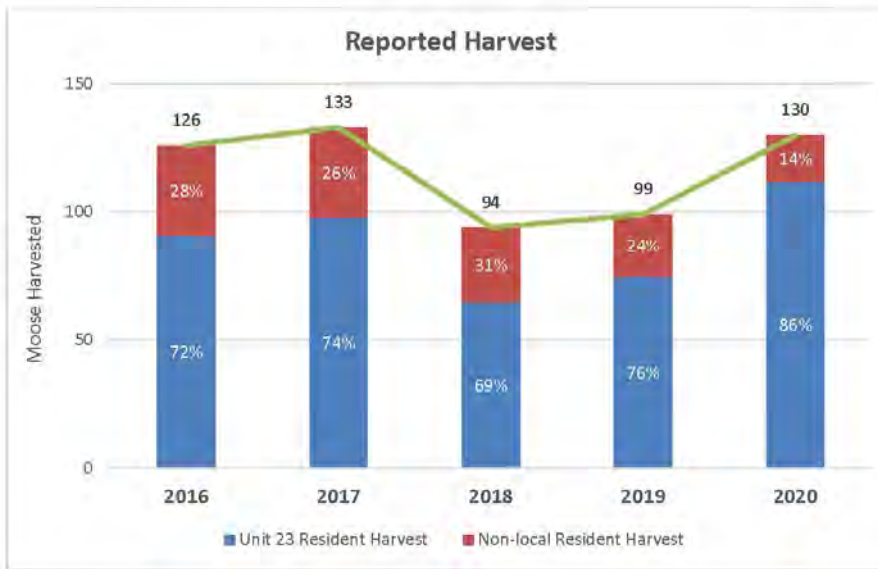


Figure 8. GMU 23 reported moose harvest, 2016-2020.

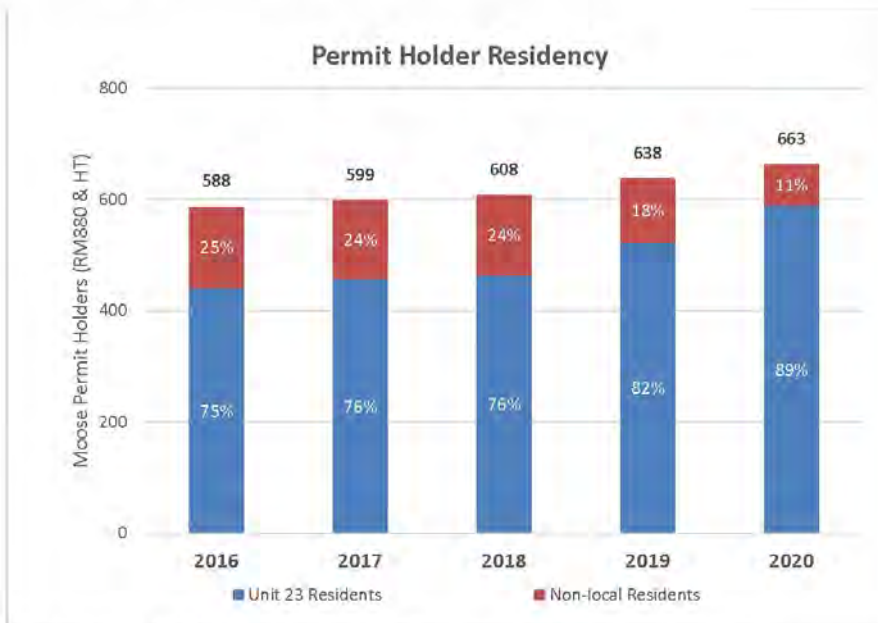


Figure 9. GMU 23 RM880 and general harvest ticket permit holder residency, 2016-2020.



Figure 10. GMU 23 RM880 and general harvest ticket permit holder residency, RY17-20.

Table 2. GMU23 RM880 and general harvest ticket (GM000) permit and harvest statistics, 2016-2020.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
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RM880					
Total Permits Issued	519	509	543	585	632
U23 Resident	413	424	449	511	586
U23 Resident Harvest	81	89	62	73	111
U23 Resident Unreported	2	36	135	14	0
Non-local AK Residents	105	85	94	74	46
Non-local Harvest	21	19	23	13	11
Non-local Unreported	0	2	2	0	0
GM000					
U23 Resident	29	34	15	12	4
Resident Harvest	10	9	3	2	1
Non-local AK Residents	40	56	50	41	27
Non-local Harvest	14	16	6	11	7
Total Permit holders: RM880 and GM000	588	599	608	638	663
GMU 23 Resident Permit Holders	442	458	464	523	590
Percentage GMU 23 Resident	75%	76%	76%	82%	89%
Non-local AK Resident Permit Holders	145	141	144	115	73
Percent Non-local Resident	25%	24%	24%	18%	11%
Reported Harvest	126	133	94	99	130
U23 Resident Reported Harvest	91	98	65	75	112
Percentage U23 Resident Reported Harvest	72%	74%	69%	76%	86%
Non-local AK Resident Reported Harvest	35	35	29	24	18
Percentage Non-local AK Resident Reported Harvest	28%	26%	31%	24%	14%

GMU 26A

The ANS for the GMU 26A (Colville) moose population is 15-30 moose. There is no intensive management objective identified for this population. The five year (2015-2019) average general season harvest is 5 moose. An average of two moose are reported harvested each year by federally qualified subsistence users and 3 moose annually are harvested by non-federally qualified subsistence users. The average of five moose that are currently being taken from the Colville moose population is well below the ANS and constitutes a 1.5% harvest rate on this population.

A controlled use area exists for the whole of 26A and has existed for decades. From July 1-September 30 and from January 1-March 31, the area is closed to the use of aircraft for moose hunting, except under the terms of a drawing permit, including the transportation of moose hunters, their hunting gear, and/or parts of moose. However, this does not apply to transportation of moose hunters or their gear, or moose parts by aircraft between publicly owned airports in the controlled use area.

There are currently three hunts in 26A areas open to residents of the State of Alaska, there are no non-resident hunts open. All of the hunts are being managed under the GM000 harvest ticket.

GMU 26A- That portion of the Colville River drainage upstream from (and including) the Anaktuvuk River drainage 1 bull August 1-September 30. The Federal regs have the bag limit and hunt area the same; however, the season is July 1-September 14.

GMU 26A-West of 156 00' W. long, excluding the Colville River drainage, one moose; however, a person may not take a calf or cow accompanied by a calf on a harvest ticket July 1-September 14.

26A Remainder-One bull by harvest ticket August 1-September 30. The Federal regs have the bag limit and hunt area the same; however, the season is August 1-September 14.

There is one additional hunt available to 26A residents under federal regulations. The hunt area for the additional federal hunt is that portion of the Colville River drainage upstream from (and including) the Anaktuvuk River drainage-1 moose; however, you may not take a calf, or a cow accompanied by a calf February 15-April 15.

The drawing hunt was last described in the 2015 State of Alaska hunting regulation book: no drawing permits have been issued since.

Cc: Eddie Grasser, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation
Ryan Scott, Assistant Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation
Lisa Olson, Operations Manager, Subsistence Section
Cheryl Brooking, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Law

APPENDIX 1

Stipulations and special conditions for operating on Federal public lands in Units 23 and 26a

WESTERN ARCTIC NATIONAL PARKLANDS

Cape Krusenstern National Monument

Kobuk Valley National Park

Noatak National Preserve

(These Stipulations do not apply to Bering Land Bridge National Preserve)

Park-Specific Stipulations 2021

MANAGEMENT FEE

1. A \$100 per year management fee will be applied for use of one or more units of Western Arctic National Parkland. Management Fees are non-refundable and due at the time of application for each year of the authorization.

GENERAL

2. Commercial activities are limited to a maximum party size of ten (10) persons, including CUA holders' employees, unless authorized by the Superintendent
3. CUA holders shall inform clients about traditional hunting practices in the park, preserve and monument and the importance of respecting these local traditions utilizing educational materials provided by the NPS.
4. Do not interfere with people engaged in subsistence activities. Do not disturb camps, allotments and/or subsistence gear.
5. Archeological, Cultural and Paleontological resources, including human remains, are protected under the Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) and Paleontological Resource Protection Act (PRPA). Disturbing, defacing and unpermitted excavation or removal is illegal.
 - a. *If human remains are encountered, do not disturb them. If possible, note the location with GPS coordinates or on a map. Contact WEAR at (907) 442-3890 as soon as possible.*
6. Except in case of emergency, the use of ranger patrol cabins or other shelter cabins in support of commercial activities is prohibited.

WILDLIFE

7. The CUA holder must take adequate precautions to prevent wildlife (especially bears) from associating humans with food, pursuant to the Superintendent's Compendium and Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, 2.10(d).

WASTE MANAGEMENT

8. The CUA holder must remove all trash and garbage generated by their activities within the park.

LANDS / CAMPING

9. Permanent or semi-permanent camps are not allowed. All camp improvements must be dismantled and removed after each client.

The following stipulations apply to **BLM lands in Unit 23.**

SPECIAL STIPULATIONS
For
SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT #FF-094435

In addition to the general terms included on the back of your Special Recreation Application and Permit (SRP) (Form 2930-1), the following conditions and stipulations is a part of this permit and are applicable to BLM-administered lands and water, including State and Native selected areas. Failure to comply with any of these stipulations or terms knowingly or willfully is a violation of 43 CFR 2932.57, punishable by up to a \$100,000 fine and/or a year in jail.

Use Limitations

1. This permit does not authorize storage of fuel on BLM lands.
2. Long-term or over-winter storage of equipment or gear is not permitted without BLM authorization.
3. Additional persons authorized to conduct business with BLM concerning this permit in 2015 include: None.
4. This permit authorizes day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights and use of no more than three cumulative staging area (base and spike camps) acres on BLM administered lands.
5. This permit does not authorize construction of new aircraft landing areas, because actual construction of new landing areas by extensive clearing would require conformance with Federal Aviation Administration guidelines and a long-term authorization. Minor improvements, such as moving rocks or logs, to allow an area to be used for aircraft landing must be conducted under the limitations of 43 CFR 8365.1-5 to limit impacts to vegetation and soils. These limitations state no person shall: Willfully deface, remove or destroy any personal property, or structure, or any scientific, cultural, archaeological or historic resource, natural object or area; willfully deface, remove or destroy plants or their parts, soil, rocks or minerals or cave resources. This permit does not authorize exclusive use of landing areas.
6. Only the use of dead trees for campfires is permitted. This permit does not authorize the cutting of live trees. Permittee shall make their employees and clients aware of responsible low-impact practices and techniques, as outlined in the enclosed Alaska Wildlands Leave No Trace Skills and Ethics booklet.
7. Within 14 days from the completion of the last permitted event, all trash shall be hauled out by the permittee and disposed of in a proper landfill, dumpster, or trashcan. Cans, glass, plastics, batteries and other non-combustible/non-degradable materials shall not be burned. Do not bury refuse. Gray water and human waste shall be disposed of at least 100 feet beyond the ordinary high water mark of any water body. Bury all gray water and human waste. When possible, we encourage the use of portable toilet systems along rivers (e.g. porta-potties).

8. The Authorized Officer (AO) may suspend or modify an SRP, including adaptive management strategies, if necessary to protect public resources, health, safety, or the environment or as a result of non-compliance with permit stipulations.

Vehicles/Aircraft/Gear

9. For prevention of non-native invasive plant prevention and mitigation, all vehicles, transport equipment used in access, construction, maintenance and operations of project must be thoroughly cleaned prior to moving equipment and gear from point of origin across or onto BLM managed lands. Washing and/or brushing equipment and gear to remove material that can contain weed seeds or other propagates helps to insure equipment is weed and weed seed free. High pressure washing is recommended to treat any wheeled or tracked vehicles, buckets, shovels, any digging tools, boats, boat motors and trailers, etc., to remove potential weeds, seeds, and soil carrying weed propagules, and vegetative material. Tents and other camping gear should be thoroughly cleaned and shaken out at point of origin (i.e. Anchorage) prior to transport to spike camp locations. All gear, tool bags and accessories must be free of any plant debris, mud, and materials that can be the source of non-native invasive plants and pathogens. Client's boots and gear should be inspected and cleaned prior to departure from point of origin in Alaska. Care should be taken to contain and properly dispose of debris cleaned from gear (double bag and dispose of in proper landfill, dumpster, or trashcan).
10. The use of felt-soled wading boots is prohibited.

Fuel and Waste Management

11. As previously stated, this permit does not authorize the use or storage of fuel on BLM lands. Waste water, non-hazardous solid waste, hazardous substance storage containers, and spills shall be managed in accordance with Title 18 Alaska Administration Code (see Attachments 1 and 2).
12. To avoid conflicts with bears, sealed bear proof containers are suggested for food and unburned waste until such waste can be removed from all camps. Meat and animal parts shall be removed from all camps as soon as possible to avoid attracting bears.

Federal, State, Local Laws and Regulations

13. Copies of State guide permits for people authorized to conduct business with BLM concerning the permit shall be submitted to the BLM before authorization or re-authorization is approved for every year the permit is in effect. This includes Assistant Guide and Class A Assistant Guide licenses.

Miscellaneous

14. A performance evaluation shall be completed by the BLM for all permittees. The purpose of a performance evaluation is to evaluate a permittee's performance and compliance with the terms and stipulations of the permit. The permittee will be given written notice of results of annual performance evaluations after the conclusion of the permittee's operating season, which will include the level of performance and the status of corrections that may be required to retain the permit.

GENERAL TERMS
For
SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT #FF-094435

1. The permittee shall comply with all Federal, state, and local laws; ordinances; regulations; orders; postings; or written requirements applicable to the area or operations covered by the Special Recreation Permit (SRP or permit). The permittee shall ensure that all persons operating under the authorization have obtained all required Federal, state, and local licenses or registrations. The permittee shall make every reasonable effort to ensure compliance with these requirements by all agents of the permittee and by all clients, customers, participants, and spectators.
2. An SRP authorizes special uses of the public lands and related waters and, should circumstances warrant, the permit may be modified by the BLM at any time, including modification of the amount of use. The authorized officer may suspend or terminate an SRP if necessary to protect public resources, health, safety, the environment, or because of non-compliance with permit stipulations. Actions by the BLM to suspend or terminate an SRP are appealable.
3. No value shall be assigned to or claimed for the permit, or for the occupancy or use of Federal lands or related waters granted thereupon. The permit privileges are not to be considered property on which the permittee shall be entitled to earn or receive any return, income, price, or compensation. The use of a permit as collateral is not recognized by the BLM.
4. Unless expressly stated, the permit does not create an exclusive right of use of an area by the permittee. The permittee shall not interfere with other valid uses of the Federal land by other users. The United States reserves the right to use any part of the area for any purpose.
5. The permittee or permittee's representative may not assign, contract, or sublease any portion of the permit authorization or interest therein, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily. However, contracting of equipment or services may be approved by the authorized officer in advance, if necessary to supplement a permittee's operations. Such contracting should not constitute more than half the required equipment or services for any one trip or activity and the permittee must retain operational control of the permitted activity. If equipment or services are contracted, the permittee shall continue to be responsible for compliance with all stipulations and conditions of the permit.
6. All advertising and representations made to the public and the authorized officer must be accurate. Although the addresses and telephone numbers of the BLM may be included in advertising materials, official agency symbols may not be used. The permittee shall not use advertising that attempts to portray or represent the activities as being conducted by the BLM. The permittee may not portray or represent the permit fee as a special federal user's tax. The permittee must furnish authorized officer.

7. The permittee assumes responsibility for inspecting the permitted area for any existing or new hazardous conditions, e.g., trail and route conditions, landslides, avalanches, rocks, changing water or weather conditions, falling limbs or trees, submerged objects, hazardous flora/fauna, abandoned mines, or other hazards that present risks for which the permittee assumes responsibility.
8. In the event of default on any mortgage or other indebtedness, such as bankruptcy, creditors shall not succeed to the operating rights or privileges of the permittee's SRP.
9. The permittee cannot, unless specifically authorized, erect, construct, or place any building, structure, or other fixture on public lands. Upon leaving, the lands must be restored as nearly as possible to pre-existing conditions.
10. The permittee must present or display a copy of the SRP to an authorized officer's representative, or law enforcement personnel upon request. If required, the permittee must display a copy of the permit or other identification tag on equipment used during the period of authorized use.
11. The authorized officer, or other duly authorized representative of the BLM, may examine any of the records or other documents related to the permit, the permittee or the permittee's operator, employee, or agent for up to 3 years after expiration of the permit.
12. The permittee must submit a post-use report to the authorized officer by January 1 of every year the permit is authorized. If the post-use report is not received by the established deadline, the permit will be suspended and/or late fees assessed.
13. The permittee shall notify the authorized officer of any incident that occurs while involved in activities authorized by this permit, which result in death, personal injury requiring hospitalization or emergency evacuation, or in property damage greater than \$2,500 (lesser amounts if established by state law). Reports should be submitted within 24 hours.

ATTACHMENT 1

Pollution Prevention and Reporting Stipulations for management of Wastewater, Solid Waste, and Spill Prevention and Response

Wastewater must be managed in accordance with Title 18 Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 72, (18 AAC 72) Wastewater Disposal. Wastewater is defined as Human Waste (sewage), and Gray Water (water which has been used for personal hygiene, washing clothing, tools, equipment, or sanitizing cooking and eating materials). If the standards for Pit Privies (Outhouse) found at 18 AAC 72.030 (extract at Attachment 2) cannot be met, all wastewater must be collected (in a portable toilet for example) and transported to a state approved disposal facility. Upon closure of a site the Pit Privy(s) must be limed and completely back-filled with the surface area covered and re-graded to approximate original appearance. Pit Privies must be authorized by the BLM in advance and identified within their submitted Operating Plan.

Non-Hazardous Solid Waste (trash/refuse) may be burned in pits. All unburned/unburnable trash/refuse will be back hauled from the area and disposed in an approved waste disposal site. All fire pits must be removed or destroyed after use. Trash/refuse will not be disposed of in a Pit Privy. Food waste and human waste should be disposed of daily to reduce conflicts with wildlife which may be attracted.

Hazardous Waste will be back hauled from the area and properly disposed by the generator at the end of each year a permit is in effect. Hazardous wastes are defined by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Hazardous wastes include, but are not limited to; fuel, oils and grease, compressed gas cylinders (propane, butane, aerosol cans, etc.), batteries, insect repellants/pesticides, ammunition, and residues of spills of any of the above.

Fuel, oil, or hazardous substance storage containers will be stored a minimum of 150 feet away from the ordinary high water mark of any water body. Containers with a total combined capacity of 110 gallons must be stored within an impermeable diked area or portable impermeable structure capable of containing 110 percent capacity of the largest independent container. Accumulated rain/snow melt water must be properly removed periodically to ensure the containment structure's capacity remains adequate at all times. All containers must be clearly marked with the contents and owner's name.

Spills/releases to the environment of fuel, oil, or hazardous substances will be responded to and cleaned-up immediately. Adequate spill response/cleanup materials such as absorbent pads, shovels, and heavy gauge plastic bags or containers will be available and on-hand at each location where fuels/oil are stored or used. Persons who are expected to respond to spills of oil or hazardous substances must be properly trained in accordance with the standards prescribed in Code of Federal Regulations 29, Part 1910.120(q). No dumping of fuel in pits on public land is authorized or tolerated. Spills of fuel/oil or any hazardous substance will be reported to the BLM, and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation as required by Title 18 Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 75; Oil & Hazardous Substances Pollution Control. Specific direction on reportable quantities and time allowances is found at 18 AAC 75.300, Discharge Release Notification; Release Reporting (extract at Attachment 2).

ATTACHMENT 2

TITLE 18 ALASKA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE CHAPTER 72 – WASTEWATER DISPOSAL (EXTRACT)

18 AAC 72.030. PIT PRIVIES. Pit privies must meet the separation distance requirements in 18 AAC 72.020. A person may not dispose of gray water in a pit privy. (Eff. 4/1/99, Register 149)

18 AAC 72.020. SEPARATION DISTANCES

(b) The minimum separation distance between the mean annual high water level of a lake, river, stream, spring, or slough, or the mean higher high water level of coastal waters, and a lift station, holding tank, septic tank, soil absorption system, seepage pit, pit privy, or other wastewater collection, treatment, or disposal system is 100 feet, measured horizontally.

(i) A person may not install a pit privy in an area subject to flooding. The vertical separation between the lowest point of a pit privy and the water table, measured during the season of the year with maximum water table elevation, must be at least four feet.

TITLE 18 ALASKA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE CHAPTER 75 – OIL & HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES POLLUTION CONTROL (EXTRACT)

18 AAC 75.300. DISCHARGE OR RELEASE NOTIFICATION; REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Subject to (b) of this section, a person in charge of a facility or operation shall notify the department by telephone, and immediately afterwards send the department a written notice by facsimile, hand delivery, or first class mail, informing the department about a discharge or release of a hazardous substance at or from the facility or operation as follows:

(1) as soon as the person has knowledge of a

(A) discharge or release of a hazardous substance other than oil;

(B) discharge or release of oil to water, or

(C) discharge or release, including a cumulative discharge or release, of oil in excess of 55 gallons solely to land outside an impermeable secondary containment area or structure; and

(2) within 48 hours after the person has knowledge of a discharge or release, including a cumulative discharge, of oil solely to land

(A) in excess of 10 gallons, but 55 gallons or less; or

(B) in excess of 55 gallons, if the discharge or release is the result of the escape or release of oil from its original storage tank, pipeline, or other immediate container into an impermeable secondary containment area or structure.

(b) A person in charge of a facility or operation shall maintain, and provide to the department monthly, a written record of each discharge or release, including a cumulative discharge or release, of one gallon to 10 gallons of oil solely to land.

(c) If a person in charge of a facility or operation has entered into an agreement with the department, as provided under AS 46.03.755(b) or AS 46.09.010(b), for the periodic reporting of a discharge or release of a hazardous substance, the terms of the agreement replace the applicable requirements of this section for the hazardous substance.

(d) After receiving notice of a discharge or release under (a) of this section, and until containment and cleanup are completed, the department will require interim reports as the department considers necessary to ascertain any threat to human health, safety, or welfare, or to the environment.

(e) Unless the department determines that a written report is not needed for the department to ascertain any threat to human health, safety, or welfare, or to the environment, a written report must be submitted to the department within 15 days after containment and cleanup are completed or, if no cleanup occurs, within 15 days after the discharge or release. The report must be submitted to the department's Anchorage, Fairbanks, or Juneau office, whichever is nearest to the location of the discharge, unless the department specifies otherwise. The report must contain the information specified in (f) of this section.

(f) A report, record, or notification required by this section must contain, as applicable,

- (1) the date and time of the discharge or release;
- (2) the location of the discharge or release;
- (3) the name of the facility or operation;
- (4) the name, mailing address, and telephone number of
 - (A) each responsible person; and
 - (B) the owner and the operator of the facility or operation;
- (5) the type and amount of each hazardous substance discharged or released;
- (6) factors that caused or contributed to the discharge or release;
- (7) a description of any environmental effects of the discharge or release, or the containment and cleanup, to the extent those effects can be identified;
- (8) a description of the containment or cleanup action taken;
- (9) the estimated amount of
 - (A) hazardous substance cleaned up; and
 - (B) hazardous waste generated;
- (10) the date and method of disposal or treatment of the hazardous substance, contaminated equipment, contaminated materials, contaminated soil, and contaminated water;
- (11) a description of actions being taken to prevent another discharge or release; and
- (12) other information that the department requires to fully assess the cause and impact of the discharge or release, including any sampling reports and a description and estimate of any remaining contamination.

Note: Spills required to be reported to the State of Alaska must also be reported to BLM.

Bureau of Land Management
Anchorage Field Office, 4700 BLM Road, Anchorage, AK 99507
Post Use Report for Guide-Outfitting, DUE JANUARY 1st Annually

Company Name _____ Operator _____
 Permit Number _____ Permit Area _____
 Year _____

Date(s) on BLM Land	# of Clients	# of Staff	User Days*	Species Taken	Date, Sex, and Location Taken	Total Receipts
TOTALS						
ALLOWABLE DISCOUNT** (circle one)				0%	40%	80%
USER FEE 3% (adjusted total X .03)					3%	

Signed _____ Date _____

* User Day is any part of a day spent on BLM Land. Combine both Client and Staff Days.

** See next page. Talk to your permit administrator.

ALLOWABLE DISCOUNT

Percent of total time on BLM Lands or related waters	Fee Reduction	Multiplication Factor
Less than 6%	80%	.2
Between 6-60%	40%	.6
Greater than 60%	0%	--

Describe any management problems associated with your permit or use of public lands which you feel needs our attention:

Latitude and Longitude of Base Camp, Spike Camp(s), and landing area(s):

Other Comments:

The following stipulations apply to **BLM lands in Unit 26A.**

FF097300 [REDACTED] SRP 2021 Stipulations

Administrative Stipulations

1. The Permittee is responsible to obtain all required permits and authorizations. Authorized users will follow all Federal and State of Alaska laws and regulations and will comply with all applicable Federal and State of Alaska environmental standards.
2. Permittee shall provide BLM with a detailed map of all camp locations, trails used, and location and species harvested located accurately on a USGS quadrangle map of the 1:63,360 scale. Please include the dates of the trip, the number of people who camped at each site, and GPS location (with datum noted). Data shall be transmitted to the BLM in a GIS format (ESRI shapefiles referencing the North American Datum of 1983).
3. The BLM, through the Arctic District Manager, reserves the right to impose closure of any area to operators in periods when fire danger or other dangers to natural resources are severe.
4. It is the responsibility of the Permittee to ensure that all individuals brought to the project area under its auspices adhere to these stipulations. Authorized users of the planning area shall provide all employees and clients with a briefing regarding stipulations applicable to the permit.
5. A copy of applicable stipulations will be posted in a conspicuous place in each campsite.
6. The authorized user shall maintain an aircraft log of the following information for each take-off and landing (which shall be turned in to BLM in **electronic format** in an excel spreadsheet with each item below listed in a separate column no later than **November 1, each year**):
 - Type of Aircraft
 - Aircraft N number
 - Date
 - Time
 - Decimal Degree Format – latitude of takeoff location
 - Decimal Degree Format – longitude of takeoff location
 - Date
 - Time
 - Decimal Degree Format – latitude of landing location
 - Decimal Degree Format – longitude of landing location

Standard Stipulations

7. Grey wash water and kitchen wastewater may be filtered to remove the solids and the liquid discharged to the land surface, provided the disposal area is a minimum of 100 feet from any water body or stream.

8. All operations shall be conducted with due regard for good resource management and in such a manner as not to block any stream, or drainage system, or change the character or course of a stream, or cause the pollution or siltation of any stream or lake.
9. The Permittee will take no action that interferes with subsistence activities of rural users or restricts the reasonable access of subsistence users to public lands. This may include but is not limited to disturbance of wildlife and their movements near subsistence hunters, and damage to cabins, trails, traditional campsites or caches used by subsistence users. The Permittee must familiarize themselves, their team, and their pilots with any subsistence camps and cabins located near their project site (map available upon request) and, when using aircraft, make all reasonable efforts to avoid disturbing hunters.
10. All activities shall be conducted to avoid or minimize disturbance to vegetation. The clearing of vegetation for camps or aircraft landing areas is prohibited.
11. In accordance with the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470aa), the removal or disturbance of archeological or historic artifacts is prohibited. The excavation, disturbance, collection, or purchase of historical, recent, ethnological, or archaeological specimens or artifacts is prohibited. Such items include both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and associated artifacts, including but not limited to stone tools, modified bone, antler, ivory, or wood material, campfire rings, stone cairns, cabins and other structures and their ruins, mining equipment, refuse dumps, etc. In accordance with the Paleontological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470aaa), the disturbance, excavation and collection of vertebrate fossils (the bones of prehistoric animals) is also prohibited.
12. Disposal of human waste within 200 feet of water bodies is prohibited.
13. When digging cat holes or pit toilets, the surface vegetation or organic mat will be retained and replaced once the hole is filled to encourage rapid natural recovery.
14. Toilet paper and all hygiene products (including feminine products and diapers) must be packed out.
15. Attracting wildlife to food and garbage is prohibited.
16. Burial of garbage is prohibited.
17. All areas will be left clean of debris.
18. Feeding and/or chasing wildlife is prohibited. Particular attention will be given to avoid disturbing caribou.
19. Hazing of wildlife by aircraft is prohibited. Pursuit of running wildlife is hazing. If wildlife begins to run as an aircraft approaches, the aircraft is too close and must break away.

20. The authorized user shall protect all survey monuments and be responsible for survey costs if remonumentation is required as a result of the user's actions. Survey monuments include, but are not limited to, General Land Office and Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey Corners, reference corners, witness points, U.S. Coast and Geodetic benchmarks and triangulation stations, military control monuments, and recognizable civil (both public and private) survey monuments.
21. In the event of obliteration or disturbance of any of the survey monuments above, the Permittee shall promptly report the incident, in writing, to the Authorized Officer and the respective installing agency, if known. Where General Land Office or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) right-of-way monuments or references are obliterated during operations, the Permittee shall secure the services of a registered land surveyor or a BLM Cadastral surveyor to restore the disturbed monuments and references using surveying procedures found in the BLM Manual of Surveying Instructions for the Survey of Public Lands of the United States, latest edition, and file an appropriate public record of the corner rehabilitation. If the BLM cadastral surveyors or other Federal surveyors are used to restore the disturbed survey monuments, the Permittee shall be responsible for survey costs.

Project Specific Stipulations

22. Climbing of cliffs containing raptor nests is prohibited.
23. Permittee must use "bear-resistant" containers that are approved and certified by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee as "bear-resistant." Information about certified containers can be found at <http://www.igbconline.org/html/container.html>.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

COMMERCIAL LAND-BASED
SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT STIPULATIONS

Name of Company: [REDACTED]
Special Recreation Permit Number: FF097300
SRP Valid from: July 28, 2021 – July 28, 2022
Activities authorized by this SRP: Guided Hunting Trips
Pre-trip Itineraries Required? No
Post Use Report Due: November 15, 2021
Minimum Insurance Requirements: \$300,000
Fee formula: Greater of \$115 per year or 3% of gross revenue.
Applicable deductions and/or discounts: TBD

BLM Alaska Terms and Stipulations

A. General

(1) Permits issued for more than one year are subject to annual validation. To secure validation the permit holder must:

- (a) have performed satisfactorily under the terms and conditions of this permit and be in conformance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws, ordinances, regulations, orders, postings, and written requirements applicable to the area and operation covered by the permit,
- (b) ensure that all persons operating under the permit have obtained all required Federal, State, and local licenses or registrations,
- (c) have on file, with the office issuing the permit, current insurance identifying the U.S. Government as additional insured as specified in stipulation C, and
- (d) have no outstanding, past due, or unpaid billing notices.

(2) Permittees may not leave unattended personal property on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management for a period of more than 48 hours without written permission of the authorized officer, with the exception that vehicles may be parked in designated parking areas for up to 14 consecutive days. Unattended personal property is subject to disposition under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 as amended.

(3) The permit only authorizes the use for the activity, the time(s) and in the area(s) specifically described above.

(4) The permittee must maintain on file with the BLM a current and correct list of employees who will be conducting services for the company on public land. Persons providing services under this permit must be an employee of the permittee.

(5) Placement of caches of supplies and food or equipment for future trips is not allowed unless specifically authorized.

(6) The permittee must allow BLM representatives to complete permit checks to determine the validity of the permit, ascertain the group has a copy of the permit, all required equipment, and to orient trip participants about the use of public lands and safety.

B. Financial

(1) The permittee must submit a post use report by November 15, 2021. Alternative reporting arrangements may be established by written agreement with the authorized officer. An extension of this due date may be approved by the issuing office on a case-by-case basis.

The report must contain a trip-by-trip log of: trip location, beginning and ending dates of each trip, number of clients, number of guides, and gross receipts for the trip. In reporting gross receipts, the outfitter will report all payments made by the customer, with the only exception being retail sales of durable goods that remain the property of the customer and have an expected service life extending beyond the guided activity. The request for deductions based on pre- and post- trip transportation and lodging expenses and percentage of time on public land, if being claimed, must also be submitted at this time. Requests for transportation and lodging deductions must be accompanied by copies of supporting receipts documenting proof of payment.

(2) The permittee must submit a Post Use Report to the authorized officer for every year the permit is in effect. If the post use report is not received by the established deadline (see above) the following late fee schedule will be initiated:

- More than 15 days but less than 30 days after the due date: \$125
- More than 30 days after the due date, but less than 45 days: \$250

Post use reports submitted more than 45 days after the due date may result in criminal, civil, and/or administrative action to protect the interest of the United States.

(3) The permittee must maintain the following internal accounting records pertaining to the permit:

(a) W-2 records or a similar record of employment for all employees conducting trips under the permit,

(b) a record of all financial relationships with booking agents or advertisers,

(c) a record of all receipts or compensation including payments, gratuities, donations, gifts, bartering, etc., received from any source on trips conducted under the permit, and

(d) a record of all payments made by the permittee and claimed as a deduction in the permittee's fee submission.

The BLM retains the right to verify permit compliance from the books, correspondence, memoranda, and other records of the permittee, and from the records pertaining thereto of a proprietary or affiliated company during the period of the permit and for three (3) years thereafter regardless of physical location.

C. Insurance

(1) At a minimum, the permittee shall have in force public liability insurance in the appropriate amount as shown on page one.

General Guidelines for Minimum Insurance Requirements

SRP Event or Activity	Per Occurrence	Per Annual Aggregate
Low Risk: general non-competitive and non-commercial activities such as group camping, group activities, mounted orienteering, backpacking, or dog trials.	\$300,000	\$600,000
Moderate Risk: whitewater boating, horse endurance rides, OHV events, mountain bike races, rock climbing (with ropes), ultra-light outings, rodeos	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
High Risk: bungee jumping, speed record events, unaided rock climbing	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000 - \$10,000,000

(2) The policy shall state that the insurance company shall have no right of subornation against the United States of America.

(3) Such insurance must name the United States Government as additional insured and provide for specific coverage of the permittee's contractually assumed obligation to indemnify the United States.

(4) The policy shall stipulate that the authorized officer of the Bureau of Land Management shall be notified 30 days in advance of the termination or modification of the policy.

(5) The permit is not valid unless the permittee maintains a current authenticated certificate of the required insurance on file with the office issuing the permit.

- (6) The permittee shall indemnify and hold harmless the United States against any responsibility or liability for damage, death, injury, or loss to persons and property which may occur during the permitted use period or as a result of such use.
- (7) The permittee shall furnish a copy of the insurance policy directly to the authorized officer.
- (8) The name of the insured on the insurance policy must be the same as the name on the permit. Those permittees holding insurance policies which only insure the permittee and not the permittee's employees must ensure that their employees also have the required insurance in effect, and that a certificate of insurance is furnished to the authorized officer.
- (9) For multi-year permits, the insurance policy must be provided the first year, but on each subsequent year the authorized officer may accept a valid certificate of insurance.
- (10) The insurance need only be valid during periods of actual use.

D. Pre-Trip Itinerary

Prior to each trip, the permittee will file a notice of intent in writing with the BLM. The notice of intent must specify the intended dates of the trip, number of clients, number of guides, name of the lead guide and area to be visited, including the location of camps. Alternative reporting arrangements may be specified in writing by the Authorized Officer.

E. Environmental and Resource Protection

All trips must conform to *Leave No Trace* principles.

- (1) The number of participants on any trip, including guides, may not exceed the number specified in the permittee's operating plan and approved permit. The exception to this requirement is over-the-road bus tours using state and Federal highway and class B county roads.
- (2) No camping is permitted within 300 feet of a known prehistoric or historic site.
- (3) No camping is permitted within 300 feet of a water source other than perennial streams unless prior authorization is received from the authorizing officer.

F. Safety and Equipment

- (1) The permittee shall provide the equipment necessary to serve the public in a safe manner. The permittee will ensure that trips are conducted in compliance with all laws and regulations relating to vehicle operations, land use restrictions, food handling, and any other applicable regulations.
- (2) Every person serving as a guide on public land must at a minimum be trained and currently certified in Basic First Aid and Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Each guide must have legible copies of certification cards in his/her possession while operating under a BLM Special Recreation Permit in Alaska. In addition, certification cards must be filed at the permittee's headquarters and available for BLM review if necessary.
- (3) The following equipment must be carried on all commercial trips: (a) A first aid kit adequate to accommodate each activity, group, or subgroup will be carried on all trips. (b) Adequate repair kits and spare supplies appropriate for the trip and activity.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS (SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE)

Air Taxi/Big Game Transporter Services

Special Use Permit No. 75625-2102

1. The Permittee is responsible for accurate record keeping throughout the permit period and shall provide the permitting agency with a comprehensive report by **December 31**. The report will contain:
 - The phone number, names, and addresses of clients guided; dates; number of client days; and game animals taken.
 - The drop-off and pickup locations must include latitude and longitude along with description (e.g. 67° 12.50' N 159°34.300W, on the NE corner of the unnamed lake.)The permittee may submit his/her State of Alaska Transporter Activity Report as long as longitude and latitude coordinates are included to meet this permit condition.
2. The use of off road vehicles is prohibited with the exception of snowmobiles. Snowmobiles may be used when adequate snow cover exists to prevent scarring of underlying vegetation.
3. One fuel cache of up to 30 gallons for emergency use may be established on Federal lands. Secondary containment is required. The name, address and contact phone number of the permittee must be marked on each fuel container. Any deviations from this requirement must be pre-approved by the issuing official.
4. Use of refuge lands in close proximity to or intermingled with, private lands in the northwest portion of the refuge (west and north of latitude 66 degrees 28.63 minutes and longitude 159 degrees 24.67 minutes) is not authorized. A map of the area is provided with the approved permit and the legal description of the area is available upon request.
5. The operation of aircraft at altitudes and in flight paths resulting in disturbance to subsistence hunters and other users of the refuge is prohibited. It is recommended that all aircraft, except for take-off and landing, maintain a minimum altitude of 2,000 feet above ground level (AGL).

Failure to abide by any part of this special use permit; violation of any refuge related provision in Titles 43 (Part 36), (2930) or 50 (Subchapters B and C), Code of Federal Regulations; or violation of any pertinent state regulation (e.g., fish or game violation) will, with due process, be considered grounds for immediate revocation of this permit, could result in denial of future permit requests for lands administered by the permitting Federal agency, and may result in the issuance of a notice of violation and fines. This provision applies to all persons working under the authority of this permit (e.g., assistants).

1. Failure to abide by any part of this special use permit; violation of any refuge related provision in Titles 43 (Part 36) or 50 (Subchapters B and C) Code of Federal Regulations; or violation of any pertinent state regulation (e.g., fish or game violation) will, with due process, be considered grounds for immediate revocation of this permit and could result in denial of future permit requests for lands administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This provision applies to all persons working under the authority of this permit (e.g., assistants). Appeals of decisions relative to permits are handled in accordance with 50 Code of Federal Regulations 36.41.
2. The permittee is responsible for ensuring that all employees, party members, aircraft pilots, and any other persons working for the permittee and conducting activities allowed by this permit are familiar with and adhere to the conditions of this permit.
3. NA
4. Any problems with wildlife and/or animals taken in defense of life or property must be reported immediately to the refuge manager and Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and be salvaged in accordance with State regulations.
5. The permittee and permittee's clients do not have the exclusive use of the site(s) or lands covered by this permit, except for the authorized camp facilities.
6. This permit may be cancelled or revised at any time by the refuge manager in case of emergency (e.g., high fire danger, flooding, unusual resource problems, etc.).
7. NA
8. The permittee shall maintain comprehensive general liability insurance (\$300,000 each occurrence, \$500,000 annual aggregate) throughout the use period specified on the permit, with the Fish and Wildlife Service named as coinsured.
9. NA
10. The permittee is responsible for accurate record keeping. By December 31 each year, the permittee must provide the refuge manager with a client use report showing the number of

clients; the dates each client was on the Refuge; the species each client hunted; and the number of each species harvested. The permittee must also provide a legible copy of the State's "Hunt Record" for each client. This report shall be certified by the permittee as being complete and accurate.

11. The Permittee will remit all required annual fees (e.g., client use day, reserved land site) within 30 days after receiving a bill for collection.
12. This permit authorizes use on State selected lands. If any of these lands are conveyed during the term of this permit, the permittee will no longer be authorized to use those State lands, and must seek authorization from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. For permits issued for multiple years, it is the responsibility of the permit holder to re-check land status with the permitting office to ensure selected lands authorized for use under this permit continue to remain under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
13. This permit authorizes use of the Native selected lands. If any of these selected lands are conveyed during the term of this permit, the permittee will no longer be authorized to use those lands. For permits issued for multiple years, it is the responsibility of the permit holder to re-check land status with the permitting office to ensure selected lands authorized for use under this permit continue to remain under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
14. In accordance with the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470ee), the removal or disturbance of archeological or historic artifacts is prohibited. The excavation, disturbance, collection, or purchase of historical or archaeological specimens or artifacts on refuge lands is prohibited.
15. Permittees shall maintain their use areas in a neat and sanitary condition. Latrines must be located at least 150 feet from springs, lakes, and streams to avoid contamination of water resources. All property (except cabins and/or tent frames) and garbage associated with the permitted activity must be removed from refuge lands upon departing for the season.
16. The construction or clearing of landing strips or pads is prohibited. Incidental hand removal of rocks and other minor obstructions may be permitted.
17. The use of off-highway vehicles is prohibited unless specifically authorized in writing in this permit.
18. The operation of aircraft at altitudes and in flight paths resulting in the herding, harassment, hazing, or driving of wildlife is prohibited. It is recommended that all aircraft, except for take-off and landing, maintain a minimum altitude of 2,000 feet above ground level (AGL).
19. Aircraft use must be conducted in accordance with the authorized plan of operation, and in compliance with FAA regulations. All aircraft being used in a commercial guiding operation must have 12 inch identification numbers in easily visible contrasting colors.
20. Construction of cabins or other permanent structures is prohibited.
21. The permittee's operation plan, as amended and accepted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is hereby incorporated in its entirety as a special condition. All deviations from the operations plan must receive prior written approval by the Refuge Manager or his designee.
22. Any action by a permittee or the permittee's employees which unduly interferes with or harasses other refuge visitors or impedes access to any site is strictly prohibited. Examples of prohibited acts include, but are not limited to, low flights over camps or persons at less than 500 feet (unless landing), parking aircraft or placing other objects (rocks, tents, etc.) on any

area so as to restrict landing use by other aircraft or persons, and the placement of ghost camps (i.e., unoccupied tents) to falsely indicate the use of an area.

23. Fuel storage sites must be approved in advance by the Refuge Manager. Preparations to prevent and respond to a fuel spill must be fully adequate at all sites for the amount of fuel stored on site.
24. All food and garbage will be secured in a manner that minimizes attraction to wildlife and must be removed from the field before vacating the site for the season.
25. As soon as practicable, but in no case to exceed 30 days, the permittee shall notify the refuge manager of any state or federal fish or wildlife related violations by the permittee or persons employed by the permittee as a guide or assistant guide (if known to the permittee), who have been convicted, pled nolo contendere, forfeited collateral, or had a guiding license suspended or revoked. Notification is required for violations without regard to where they occurred.
26. As soon as practicable, but in no case to exceed 30 days, the permittee shall notify the refuge manager of any accidents or other safety related incidents associated with permitted activities on the refuge. Reportable incidents include those that result in a death or physical injury requiring immediate medical attention beyond basic first aid, or that involve significant property damage or loss.

APPENDIX 2

Transporter and Guide Activity on Federal Public Lands in Units 23 and 26A: National Park Service, continued

Number of Commercial Use Authorization Flights

At times, the NPS has reported on the estimated number of Commercial Use Authorization flights into NPS-managed lands. However, there are limits to what the reported data can tell us. Currently, Commercial Use Authorization holders generally report one entire party of clients transported to and from the same location on one form: the form only accounts for one drop-off and one pick-up roundtrip flight. The NPS staff estimate of flights are based on the inference that two round-trip flights took place (one for drop-off and one for pick-up) no matter the size of the specific party.

Complicating matters, many “drop-off” flights, may stop during their return flight and pick up other clients from different parties that are leaving the field; this is common practice. In such cases, this “pickup” flight would be reported separately, but may in fact not be an entirely separate flight, thus having an impact on these numbers whereby fewer actual flights occurred. The actual numbers of flights cannot be determined without further research. In order to report a more accurate number of flights, further analysis of TARs and NPS Activity Reports and discussions with individual Commercial Use Authorization holders to better understand their flight practices is required.

Estimated Number of Animals Harvested via Clients Transported to Field by Commercial Use Authorization holders and Concessionaire: Noatak National Preserve only

This data does not apply to CAKR or KOVA, as only resident zone communities are allowed to hunt in those park units. These users are not permitted to be transported by aircraft to parks or monuments for hunting purposes. This data does not include animals harvested by Federally qualified subsistence users.

Because reporting forms since 2014 require the species and estimated weight to be reported rather than the actual number of animals, a preliminary attempt to more accurately account for total number of animals harvested was inferred based on the reported transported weight of each species. In many cases, transporters and guides actually list the number of animals transported in lieu or in addition to the weight. In such cases, the actual number count that was reported was used. This inference only applied to caribou, as grizzly, wolf, and moose taken were negligible in comparison and more obvious as individual counts, either by directly reporting the individual animal or by the residency status present in the group.

It is acknowledged that this method of number count inferred by transported weight has a margin of error, and that a more accurate capture of these numbers can be achieved by comparing TARs against individual hunts and Harvest Reports, available only by request through the State of Alaska. This is planned but will take further effort to investigate.

Species	2018	2019	2020
Wolf	2	2	1
Moose	1	5	1
Caribou	99	154	216
Grizzly	4	6	3

Estimated animals harvested by non-Federally qualified users: Commercial Use Authorization holder-transported. Derived from reported game weight (Atkinson 2022, pers. comm.).

Species	2018	2019	2020
Wolf	2	2	1
Moose	1	5	1
Caribou	99	154	216
Grizzly	4	6	3

Estimated animals harvested by non-Federally qualified users: guided hunters (Atkinson 2022, pers. comm.). Derived from reported game weight (Atkinson 2022, pers. comm.).

APPENDIX 3

ANILCA Section 810 analyses conducted by Federal land-managing agencies for transporters and guides operating in Units 23 and 26A. Note: Only the most recent example of a Section 810 analysis is given for each agency.

The following Section 810 analysis was conducted by **Western Arctic National Parklands** in 2008.

ANILCA SECTION 810(A)

Summary of Evaluations and Findings

Big Game Transportation Services in Noatak National Preserve

I. Introduction

This evaluation was prepared to comply with Title VIII, Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). It summarizes the evaluation of potential restrictions to subsistence activities that could result from issuing Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) to all applicants seeking to provide fixed wing aircraft and boat transporter services on lands managed by the National Park Service (NPS) in Noatak National Preserve. The terms and conditions of the CUAs would be similar to those included in the CUAs authorizing transporter services in 2007.

II. Noatak National Preserve

ANILCA created new units and additions to existing units of the National Park System in Alaska. ANILCA Section 201(8)(a) created Noatak National Preserve for the following purposes:

- to maintain the environmental integrity of the Noatak River and adjacent uplands within the Preserve in such a manner as to assure the continuation of geological and biological processes unimpaired by adverse human activity;
- to protect habitat for, and populations of, fish and wildlife, including but not limited to caribou, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, moose, wolves, and for waterfowl, raptors, and other species of birds;
- to protect archeological resources;
- and in a manner consistent with the foregoing, to provide opportunities for scientific research.

III. Taking of Fish and Wildlife in Noatak National Preserve

ANILCA Section 1313 states: "A National Preserve in Alaska shall be administered and managed as a unit of the National Park System in the same manner as a national park except as otherwise provided in this Act and except that the taking of fish and wildlife for sport purposes and subsistence uses, and trapping shall be allowed in a national Preserve under applicable State and Federal law and regulation."

IV. The Evaluation Process

Section 810(a) of ANILCA states: "In determining whether to withdraw, reserve, lease, or otherwise permit the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands . . . the head of the Federal agency . . . over such lands . . . shall evaluate the effect of such use, occupancy, or disposition on subsistence uses and needs, the availability of other lands for the purposes sought to be achieved, and other alternatives which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes. No such withdrawal, reservation, lease, permit, or other use, occupancy or disposition of such lands which would significantly restrict subsistence uses shall be affected until the head of such Federal agency:

1. gives notice to the appropriate State agency and the appropriate local committees and regional councils established pursuant to Section 805;
2. gives notice of, and holds, a hearing in the vicinity of the area involved; and
3. determines that (A) such a significant restriction of subsistence uses is necessary, consistent with sound management principles for the utilization of the public lands, (B)

the proposed activity would involve the minimal amount of public lands necessary to accomplish the purposes of such use, occupancy, or other disposition, and (C) reasonable steps would be taken to minimize adverse impacts upon subsistence uses and resources resulting from such actions."

V. Proposed Action on Federal Land

The proposed action is to issue commercial use authorizations (CUAs) to companies that provide big game transportation services to sport hunters on NPS-managed lands in Noatak National Preserve. (Noatak National Preserve is 6,569,904 acres. Of these, 6,276,089 are managed by the NPS.) Engaging in any business, including transportation services, is prohibited in park units except pursuant to a written authorization. CUAs are one method to authorize companies to provide visitor services. CUAs are authorized pursuant to 16 USC 5966. CUAs may only be used where the service to be provided will have minimal impact on the resources and values of the unit and are consistent with the purposes for which the unit was established. NPS cannot issue more CUAs than are consistent with the preservation and proper management of the park resources and values. The statute also provides that CUAs shall contain conditions appropriate for the protection of visitors, provision of adequate and appropriate visitor services, and protection and proper management of the resources and values of the park.

Big game transportation service providers are usually referred to as transporters. In 2006-2007, seven transporters had CUAs. Six provided services by fixed-wing aircraft and one provided services by boat.

The CUAs that authorized transporter services in 2007 did not contain many restrictions. Transporter services were not limited by season of operation, number of trips, number of clients, or areas of operation.

In 2007, almost all the transporters operated from early August until early October. Transporters made approximately 650 trips into the Preserve, carrying 475 sport hunters, their equipment, and any animals they harvested. Most dropped clients in the upper Agashashok River, the Noatak River between Sapun Creek and the Nimiuktuk River, the Eli River, the Kugururok River area, and the Kelly River area. The number of transporter flights has increased approximately 3-5% each year during the past decade.

Clients of transporters usually harvest caribou and moose. Non-subsistence seasons and bag limits are set by the State of Alaska Board of Game. Currently the bag limit, set by the Board of Game, for caribou is 1 and the bag limit for moose is 1.

VI. The Affected Environment Relative to Subsistence Use

The dominant feature of the Preserve is the Noatak River and its tributaries, which include 11 rivers and 37 streams. Fish are abundant and are a critical subsistence resource. Of particular note are sheefish, salmon, char, grayling, pike, lake trout, whitefish, and Dolly varden.

Alpine tundra, moist tundra, brush, forest, and aquatic vegetation are found throughout the Preserve. Most vegetation is low mat tundra, though Boreal forest covers much of the lower Noatak drainage. Blueberries, salmonberries, cranberries, and other wild plants and trees are plentiful and are important subsistence foods.

Wildlife is abundant. Caribou, moose, musk oxen, Dall sheep, brown bear, wolf, fox, lynx, marten, beaver, and muskrat are all important subsistence resources. Caribou is a particularly

critical subsistence food. Goose, swans, ducks, gulls, grouse, and ptarmigan are also common. Birds and bird eggs are important subsistence foods.

All NPS-managed lands in the Preserve are open to subsistence use subject to Federal Subsistence Board regulations. During the open water season, the Noatak River and its tributaries are the primary transportation corridors for subsistence users.

VII. Subsistence Uses and Needs Evaluation

To determine the potential impacts of authorizing transporter services on subsistence activities, three evaluation criteria were analyzed relative to existing subsistence resources:

1. The potential to reduce subsistence fish and wildlife populations by (a) reductions in number, (b) redistribution of subsistence resources, or (c) habitat losses;
2. The potential effect on subsistence fisher or hunter access;
3. The potential to increase fisher or hunter competition for subsistence resources.

1. The potential to reduce populations

(a) Reduction in Numbers:

The caribou in or migrating through Noatak National Preserve are part of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. The State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) and the NPS estimate there are 480,000 to 520,000 caribou in the herd. ADFG estimates that subsistence users typically harvest approximately 10,000 caribou per year and sport hunters harvest approximately 600 caribou per year in Game Management Unit 23. ADFG does not collect Preserve-specific data.

Based on suitable habitat and survey data, the NPS estimates there are 2,000 to 3,000 moose in the Preserve. ADFG estimates that subsistence users typically harvest approximately 130 moose per year and sport hunters harvest approximately 35 moose per year in GMU 23. Again, ADFG does not collect Preserve-specific data.

Based on the size of the caribou and moose populations, the number of caribou and moose harvested by subsistence users, and the number of caribou and moose harvested by the clients of transporters, issuing authorizations to transporters does not have the potential to reduce subsistence fish and wildlife populations.

(b) Redistribution of Resources:

On November 12, 2005, the Alaska Board of Game held an informal work session on user conflicts in Game Management Unit 23. The session was held in Kotzebue after the Board's regular meeting and many subsistence users attended.

At the meeting former Northwest Arctic Borough mayor Ross Schaeffer said, "These are the base camps of most of the transporters and guides (map in presentation). The main staging area is the Squirrel River. One of the suggestions we have is how do we protect the main migration routes of the caribou. Jim Dau and his folks have information on the caribou migration over all those years. Our people in the fall time are not getting the big bulls, the heavier animals with the fat that [sic]." At another point, Schaeffer said, "We support some hunting for sport, but it has to be controlled in such a way that we don't have these conflicts, that our communities in those migration paths are getting the caribou they need."

Borough assembly member Walter Sampson said, "When you talk about an opportunity for people within the Kobuk River, when you have spike camps set up prior to the migration of the caribou, when the caribou start moving then those caribou get deflected. They turn back and head up north. This is a loss of opportunity for the people of this region... We're talking about an opportunity at this period. The spike camps are set up to deflect the caribou. The key word is opportunity. The folks who are flown out to those areas have the first opportunity to catch those caribou, but the people of this region don't have the opportunity."

Resident Calvin Schaeffer said, "I have a cabin up the Noatak. I see airplanes get in a formation, and buzz the caribou and try to move them down to their hunters."

Former Northwest Arctic Borough planner Walter Porter said, "Interference with the caribou migration is a huge issue....People need to let the caribou go through....Delay the hunt until they move comfortably through the [Squirrel] river."

Resident John Goodwin said, "I just want to mention that historically, what had been passed down to us, our ancestors. Caribou, let the first one's [sic] pass. After they pass no matter what they do anything, they pass, they try as much as they can."

On December 1, 2005, the NPS hosted a meeting to discuss 2005 hunting season issues. Representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, ADFG, Alaska State Troopers, the Northwest Arctic Borough, NANA Regional Corporation, KIC (Native Village of Kotzebue corporation), and the Cape Krusenstern Subsistence Resource Commission attended.

At the meeting, Walter Porter said the borough holds that transporters dropped clients into the usual caribou migration paths and clients shot the lead caribou. These two actions caused the caribou to disperse across the landscape and subsistence users were unable to harvest animals where they historically had. Cape Krusenstern Subsistence Resource Chair Pete Schaeffer agreed with Porter. He said subsistence users didn't use an area until the caribou had established a migration pattern.

Brad Shults, a wildlife biologist with the NPS, says that caribou migration today is "not what it was two decades ago." Particularly, migration occurs later in the year and is more erratic.

Shults states it is possible that the current transporter operations (including impacts from airplanes) and sport hunter behavior could affect caribou migration and that investigation may be appropriate. However, he says caribou migration is complex, poorly understood, and difficult to predict. Many factors may affect migration, including weather, climate, availability of food, and size of the herd.

The NPS is not aware of any studies examining whether failing to let the first caribou establish a migration route causes disruption in the migration pattern. Similarly, NPS is not aware of any studies examining whether the location of hunting camps in certain areas deflect caribou.

While the NPS is aware of the view of many subsistence users in the area that transporters and their clients are the primary cause of caribou redistribution, there is insufficient evidence for us to conclude that a connection definitely exists. The NPS believes that further investigation is warranted.

(c) Habitat Loss:

Transporters are authorized to carry sport hunters, their equipment and the animals harvested by the hunters to and from the field. Transporters are not authorized to develop or otherwise modify preserve resources. Consequently issuance of CUAs to transporters does not have a significant effect on subsistence users through loss of habitat.

2. Restriction of Access:

Restriction of access is "A reduction in subsistence uses due to limitations on the access to harvestable resources, such as by physical or legal barriers."

Transporter CUAs do not authorize or assign the exclusive use of particular land in the Preserve to the exclusion of any other Preserve visitor or user. Sport hunters are similarly not authorized exclusive use of an area or a particular camp. NPS subsistence manager Dave Mills reports that over the years, subsistence users have told him that they are reluctant to go into an area that is being used by transporter clients. While understandable and unfortunate, that reluctance is not the result of issuance of the CUAs. Consequently, access is not limited.

3. Increase in Competition:

In April 2005, NPS cultural anthropologist Eileen Devinney presented a paper titled "User Conflicts in a Subsistence Landscape: Issues in the Upper Kobuk River, Alaska." In the slide "Factors Contributing to Tensions," Devinney writes, "Sport and subsistence hunters are competing for moose and caribou along the river corridor."

Susan Georgette is an outreach specialist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She has worked on subsistence issues over the past twenty years. In 1988, Georgette was working for ADFG. That year, she and Hanna Loon authored Technical Paper #162. In the paper, they write, "Aircraft-supported hunting along the Noatak River is reported by Noatak residents to be directly competing with and separating them from traditional hunting sites. These families have reported an increasingly difficult time obtaining their fall meat due to heavy aircraft traffic."

Georgette says that while sport hunters and subsistence users compete for the same animals, it is also necessary to consider the dimensions of space and time. Georgette says subsistence users report that historically they have taken caribou at specific places at specific times. Therefore, sport hunters and subsistence users may be competing not only for the same animal but also for the same place and time to take an animal. This distinction becomes important for subsistence users since they may not have the means to travel further to a vacant hunting area. This competition for wildlife and location results from the Congressional authorization of both subsistence and sport hunting and the seasons set by the State Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board. It is competition for a better or favorite time or location, not a shortage of wildlife.

VIII. Availability of Other Lands

This document addresses authorization of CUAs for big game transportation services in Noatak National Preserve. There are no other lands that can be substituted in the proposed action.

IX. Alternatives Considered

The proposed action is to issue CUAs to big game transportation service providers. Issuance of CUAs to transporters is among the actions categorically excluded from preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. Consequently, this 810 evaluation did not analyze alternatives developed from an environmental analysis. Two alternatives are set forth below.

One alternative is to not issue the CUAs. However, since Noatak National Preserve was established in 1980 the NPS has been issuing some type of authorization (commercial use license, incidental business permit, commercial use authorization) to all qualified transporters who request an authorization. The transporter services to be authorized for 2008 will be consistent with the purposes for which the unit was established, as they have since 1980.

A second alternative is to issue concessions contracts for big game transportation services. At this time, the NPS policy in the Alaska Region is to authorize big game transportation services by CUA, not concession contract. While issuing concession contracts would neither reduce nor eliminate the need to use the public lands for subsistence activities, it could reduce conflicts by limiting the number of contracts issued and imposing additional conditions on the operations. This and other alternatives could be examined in a National Environmental Policy Act process that the NPS will initiate in 2008.

X. Findings

Big game transportation services and sport hunting are the most contentious land management issues in Noatak National Preserve. Over the past twenty years, there have been dozens of meetings, discussions, and papers devoted to the conflict between transporters and their clients and subsistence users.

The proposed action – to issue commercial use authorizations (CUAs) to companies that provide big game transportation services to sport hunters on NPS-managed lands in Noatak National Preserve – may redistribute caribou and may increase competition for caribou. The proposed action will not unreasonably reduce numbers of caribou or moose, restrict access to subsistence resources, or contribute to habitat loss.

Transporter operations and sport hunting have location-specific, season-specific moderate to major negative impacts on subsistence caribou hunting in Noatak National Preserve. Impacts tend to be concentrated in some areas in the southwest portion of the Preserve. But as documented in this ANILCA Section 810(a) Summary of Evaluations and Findings, the proposed action does not significantly restrict subsistence uses in the Preserve.

ANILCA Section 802 sets forth the policy of congress regarding subsistence and states, “The utilization of public lands in Alaska is to cause the least adverse impact possible on rural residents who depend upon subsistence uses of the resources of such lands.” In furtherance of that policy, the NPS will continue to work to minimize the impact of other uses on subsistence users.

Specifically, the NPS will continue its hunter education efforts, annual meetings with transporters, and active protection program during the fall. In addition, it will participate in the State’s unit-wide work group on user conflicts, complete an environmental assessment for a big game transportation services plan to strengthen its management of transportation services, and consider closing certain areas of the Preserve at certain times to commercial use to reduce user conflict.

The following Section 810 analysis was conducted by **the BLM Anchorage Field Office** in 2017:

United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Anchorage Field Office

Section 810 ANILCA Compliance/Clearance
Determination of Need

Casefile Number: FF-094435

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-A010-2017-0017-DNA

Proposed Action: Special Recreation Permit (SRP) Renewal-[The Operator]

Location of Proposed Action: Guided hunting activity will take place in the following drainages in these Guide Use Areas (GUAs): GUA 23-01 Kivalina, Wulik, and Mulgrave Rivers; GUA-23-05 Kauk River drainage; 23-06 Squirrel River drainage.

Description of Proposed Action: [The Operator], has applied to renew his SRP for another ten years. There are no changes to his previous operations. [The Operator] conducts hunts for caribou, brown bear and moose annually during the fall from August 1st – October 31st.

Note: Currently, federal lands in the Squirrel River, Eli, Agashashok watersheds and in a 10 mile wide corridor along the Noatak River to the confluence of the Cutler River are closed to caribou hunting by non-qualified subsistence users.

Evaluation: The effect of the proposed action on subsistence uses and needs

The proposed action occurs on Federal lands managed by BLM. These lands are Federal Public Lands as defined in ANILCA Section 102(3) and fall under the regulatory authority of the Federal Subsistence Board and Subsistence Management Regulations for the harvest of wildlife, fish and shellfish on Federal Public Lands in Alaska. The area occurs on BLM managed lands within Game Management Units 23, which provide for federal subsistence hunting opportunities for the residents of the villages of Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Point Hope, Selawik, and Shungnak.

Fisheries:

The proposed action would not significantly reduce harvestable fisheries resources. Guided activity will focus on big game hunting, and will not involve fishing activity.

These guided hunting activities will not affect fish bearing streams or lakes and would not create impacts that reduce harvestable fisheries resources that are available for subsistence use. The proposed action

would not alter the distribution, migration or location of harvestable fisheries resources. The proposed action will not create any legal or physical barriers that would limit access by subsistence users of the fisheries resource.

Wildlife:

In June 2016, the Federal Subsistence Board voted to close caribou hunting on Federal lands in Unit 23 to non-qualified subsistence users due to declining caribou numbers and continuing conflicts between sport and subsistence users hunting caribou in the fall. In June 2017, the Federal Subsistence Board voted to close only some portions of Unit 23 to non-qualified subsistence users (sport hunters). These decisions were based on requests by the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to close federal lands in Unit 23 to sport hunting. This current closure will remain in effect until June 30, 2018. Currently, federal lands in the Squirrel River, Eli, Agashashok watersheds and in a 10 mile wide corridor along the Noatak River to the confluence of the Cutler River are closed to caribou hunting by non-qualified subsistence users. Other federal lands outside these areas are open to sport hunting for caribou. A special action request to close Unit 23 to moose hunting by non-qualified hunters in June 2017 was rejected by the Federal subsistence Board. All Federal lands in Unit 23 are open to sport hunting for moose, and brown bear under State and Federal regulations.

[The Operator] guide operation accesses the hunted areas by small airplane and the areas are hunted on foot. The closure of areas in the Squirrel River and the corridor along the Noatak River are intended to reduce conflict associated with hunters in small aircraft and subsistence hunters in boats hunting migrating caribou on the Noatak River and in areas in the Squirrel River watershed. This restriction will help reduce conflicts with guided sport hunting and provide more opportunity for subsistence caribou hunters. Therefore, the impacts to subsistence resources associated with this action would be negligible, and the proposed action should not significantly alter the distribution, migration or location of harvestable wildlife resources.

Other Resources: The proposed action would not appreciably impact any other harvestable renewable resources such as wood, berries, vegetation or water.

Expected reduction, if any, in the availability of resources due to alteration in resource distribution, migration, or location: The proposed action is not likely to alter the availability, distribution, migration, or location of subsistence resources.

Expected limitation, if any, in the access of subsistence users resulting from the proposal: None. Access to subsistence resources will not be limited by the proposed action.

Availability of other lands, if any, for the purpose sought to be achieved: Although [The Operator]'s base camp and spike camps will occur on BLM lands, the guided hunting activity will occur on surrounding state and other federal lands (with the exception of federal lands that are closed to caribou hunting by non-qualified users in Unit 23). The proposed action is for use of specific guide use areas including the Squirrel River SRMA, and therefore, no other lands are appropriate.

Other alternatives, if any, which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes:

The only alternative that would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes is to not allow or permit any activities that conflict with subsistence uses. However, BLM manages public lands for multiple uses, and there is no substantial evidence that would indicate a significant impact to subsistence users or resources as a result of this proposed action. No other alternatives were evaluated.

Finding:

This proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses. As a result of the proposed action there are no reasonably foreseeable significant decreases in the abundance or distributions of subsistence resources and no reasonably foreseeable limitations to subsistence access.

Bruce Seppi, Wildlife Biologist

Date

The following Section 810 analysis was conducted by **the BLM Arctic Field Office** in 2021:

COMPLIANCE WITH ANILCA SECTION 810 - EVALUATION AND FINDINGS

Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) requires an evaluation of subsistence uses and needs for any permitted activities on federal lands in Alaska. ANILCA requires that this evaluation include findings on 1) the effects of the proposed use, 2) the availability of other lands for the purpose, and 3) other alternatives that would reduce the use of public lands needed for subsistence.

Case File: FF097300

CX Number: DOI-BLM-AK-R000-2021-0040-CX

Date 810 Review Conducted: 07/23/2021

Applicant:

[REDACTED]

Proposed Activity: The applicant, [REDACTED], has requested to renew his Special Recreation Permit (FF097300) to conduct guided bear, caribou, and wolf hunts within Alaska State Game Management Unit (GMU) 26-08 on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arctic District (Figure 1).

COMPLIANCE WITH ANILCA SECTION 810 - EVALUATION AND FINDINGS

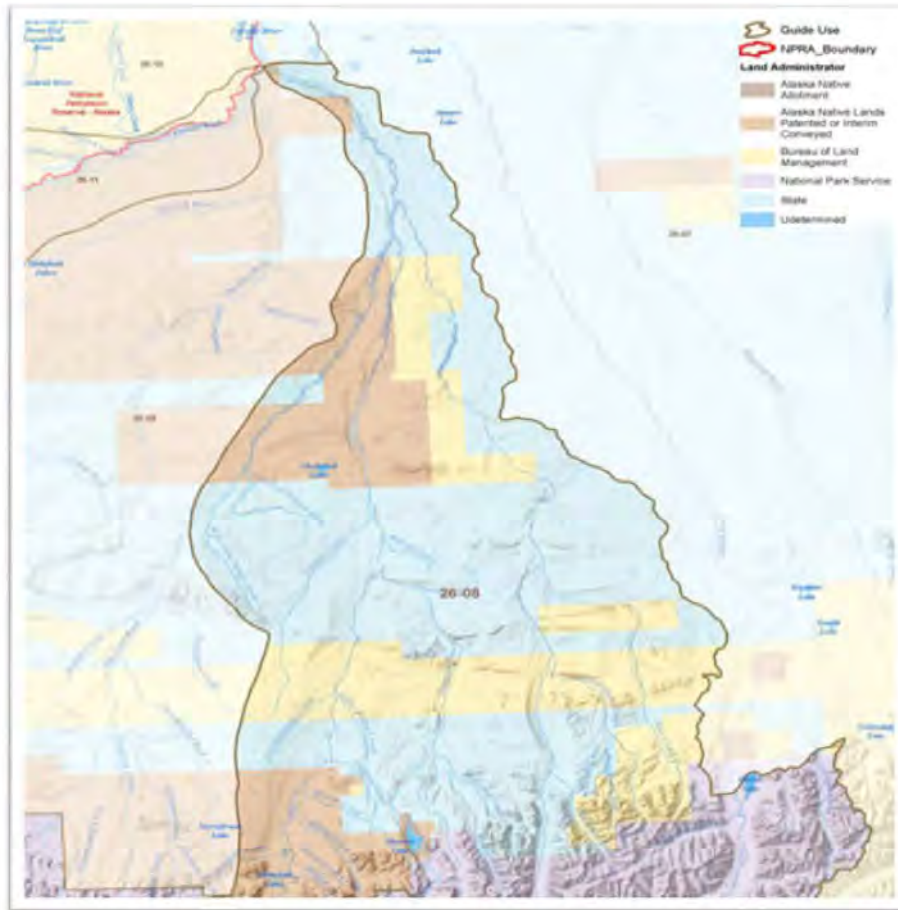


Figure 1. Location of proposed guided hunts in Alaska State Game Management Unit 26-08

Location: Alaska State Game Management Unit 28-08

Base camp and/or field camp: No field camps on BLM managed lands would be used, two camps for this activity would be placed on state lands

Dates of Proposed Action: August 1 – September 10, 2021

Number of People: Two guided hunting trips would occur, with a maximum of three clients and three guides per trip.

Access: Piper fixed wing wheeled aircraft would deliver guides and clients to camps on state owned lands.

COMPLIANCE WITH ANILCA SECTION 810 - EVALUATION AND FINDINGS

Number of Take Offs and Landings: No landings are proposed on BLM lands, however if landings are required to drop off or pick up clients and guides, there would be no more than six fixed wing landings/takeoffs.

Fuel Sites: N/A.

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant [REDACTED] has requested to renew his Special Recreation Permit (FF097300) to conduct guided bear, caribou, and wolf hunts within GMU 26-08 on lands managed by the BLM Arctic District. [REDACTED] has held a BLM special use authorization to conduct guided hunts in GMU 26-08 since 2017. In addition, [REDACTED] has authorization from the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve and the State of Alaska to conduct guided hunts within GMU 26-08.

Additional project specific information can be found on the BLM's National NEPA Register and e-planning website, at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2014469/510>.

Availability of other lands for the purpose sought to be achieved: The objective of the proposed activity is for [REDACTED] to renew his Special Recreation Permit in order to conduct guided hunts within GMU 26-08 lands. These activities are not inconsistent with the purposes of the Naval Petroleum Reserve Production Act of 1976 (NPRPA) and no other lands are appropriate for this specific purpose.

Other alternatives which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes: The no-action alternative would result in the inability of [REDACTED] conduct guided hunts within GMU 26-08 lands. With mitigation measures in place, there is no substantial evidence that would indicate a significant impact to subsistence as a result of the proposed action. No other alternatives were evaluated.

Consultation: It is the determination of the Arctic District Office that this activity does not merit special consultation with tribes and communities. Stipulations would be in place to limit contact with and disturbance of subsistence hunters, particularly in the vicinity of the Anaktuvuk Pass subsistence use area. Details will be included in the Arctic District Office Permitted Projects document that is provided to the Native Village of Nuiqsut council members on a monthly basis. Copies of this ANILCA 810 evaluation, which includes contact information should any residents have questions or concerns, will also be made available to tribal governments or other interested entities.

Evaluation: Effect of proposed action on subsistence uses and needs

Fisheries: The proposed action would not significantly reduce harvestable fisheries resources that are available for subsistence use. The proposed action would not alter the distribution, migration, or location of harvestable fisheries resources.

Wildlife: The proposed action may disturb wildlife from the immediate area of traffic but would not significantly reduce harvestable wildlife resources that are available for subsistence use. The proposed action would not create any legal barriers that would limit subsistence harvest and access. With mitigation measures in place, the proposed action would not create barriers that would limit subsistence harvest and access.

COMPLIANCE WITH ANILCA SECTION 810 - EVALUATION AND FINDINGS

Other Resources: The proposed action would not appreciably impact any other harvestable resources such as wood, water, berries, or vegetation.

FINDING

This proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably foreseeable and significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources or in the distribution of harvestable resources, and no reasonably foreseeable limitations on harvester access will result from the proposed action.

PREPARED BY: _____



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Date: 2021.07.23 18:30:20 -08'00'

Elizabeth Mikow¹

¹ U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Arctic District Office Anthropologist Elizabeth Mikow.
222 University Ave, Fairbanks, AK, 99709. Email: emikow@blm.gov. Phone: (907) 474-2309.

The following Section 810 analysis was conducted by **Selawik National Wildlife Refuge** in 2008

SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS ON SUBSISTENCE USES AND NEEDS
(ANILCA SECTION 810 EVALUATION)
2008

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, acting for the Secretary of Interior, is required by Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) to evaluate the effects on subsistence uses and needs in determining whether to withdraw, reserve, lease, or otherwise permit the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands on national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

The evaluation of effects of this proposed action/use on subsistence uses and needs is documented below. If this evaluation concludes with a finding that the proposed action would result in significant restriction to subsistence uses and needs, and we wish to proceed, we must initiate further procedural requirements of Section 810.

PROPOSED ACTION/USE: Authorize fixed-wing aircraft transporting services on the Selawik NWR; not to include Native selected, conveyed or private lands. Most operations via float plane will occur within the Selawik, Kugarak, and Tagagawik River Flats, and adjacent uplands.

EVALUATION:

1. Subsistence Resources, Uses and Needs in the Affected Area:

Selawik National Wildlife Refuge provides habitat for a diversity of wildlife and plants commonly used by local subsistence users. Migrating caribou, moose, furbearers, waterfowl, fish and berries comprise the majority of the items collected from the refuge.

Caribou is the most widely used big game animal, with the majority of the harvest occurring during the summer and fall (Georgette, 2000a). Moose are also an important source of meat in the fall. Berry picking is a common activity in August and September, and is often done in conjunction with caribou hunting. Spring is the preferred time for ice-fishing, while nets are set in spring and fall for whitefish (Georgette and Loon 1993). Residents of Selawik harvest geese predominately in the spring via snowmobile, and take ducks and their eggs from the time of their arrival, usually mid-May, until their departure in August or September (Georgette, 2000b).

2. Concerns Expressed by Potentially Affected Subsistence Users and/or the State:

Residents of Selawik and Buckland have expressed concern about the affects of low-flying aircraft and recreational hunting pressure on migrating caribou, and the adverse effect on subsistence hunter success rates. Most subsistence hunting on the refuge takes place during the fall along the Selawik and lower Kugarak Rivers via boat. Local hunters have a tradition of allowing the first “group” of caribou to move through areas along their migration routes to help establish their movements. It is believed that once the

first group goes through the rest will follow regardless of whether or not they're being hunted. Subsistence hunters believe hunting along migration routes before caribou movements are established, along with low flying air taxi aircraft, alter caribou migration, and turn caribou away from traditional hunting areas which are still being used today. Selawik residents are concerned this leads to decreased local hunter success, and increases the cost associated with longer distances traveled for a hunt. The primary areas of concern were north and west of Selawik for Selawik residents. Buckland residents were concerned about activities in the Kauk River vicinity.

3. Effects of Proposed Action or Use on Subsistence Use and Needs:

For those years which transporters have requested and received a permit for commercial operations on the refuge, they have traditionally dropped off clientele on the upper portions of the Selawik and Tagagawik Rivers and utilized lakes off the river corridor. These areas are not typically accessed by local subsistence users and are mostly south of areas used by subsistence hunters. With transporter activities on selected lands being restricted, and past transporter activity patterns considered representative of future use, the proposed activities will not significantly impact local subsistence hunters, or disrupt other subsistence activities.

4. Availability of Other Lands for the Purposes Sought to be Achieved:

The proposed activity will have approximately 1.6 million acres available to conduct transporter services. This acreage represents significant portions of the northern, eastern, and southern region(s) of the refuge. Citizens wanting to access these National Public lands have no other reasonable means.

5. Other Alternatives Which Would Reduce or Eliminate Use of Public Lands Needed for Subsistence Purposes:

The alternative for the proposed activity is to further restrict additional regions of the refuge, or totally eliminate the activity on the entire refuge, thereby limiting public access by non-local users to boat access only. Neither option may have the proper biological or administrative justification. Boat access by recreational users would likely increase user conflict, because motorboats along waterways are the primary means of transport for subsistence hunters.

FINDING: Based on review and evaluation of information contained in the supporting reference indicated below, I have determined that the proposed transporting of hunters by two fixed wing air-tax operators will not result in a significant restriction of subsistence uses.

AGENCY DECISION: Issue a special use permits to conduct commercial Transporter services on the north, east and southern portions of the Selawik NWR. USFWS, Alaska Region, Special Use Permit Standard Conditions, and Selawik NWR Special Use Permit special conditions will apply.

SIGNATURE:

Refuge Manager

Date

SUPPORTING REFERENCES:

Georgette, S. 2000a. Subsistence Harvests in Northwest Alaska: Caribou, Moose, Bear, Wolf, and Wolverine 1999-2000. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Kotzebue, Alaska. 21pp.

_____. 2000b. Subsistence Use of Birds in the Northwest Arctic Region, Alaska. Technical Paper No. 260. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Kotzebue, Alaska. 218pp.

_____ and H. Loon. 1993. Subsistence Use of Fish and Wildlife in Kotzebue, A Northwest Alaska Regional Center. Technical Paper No. 167, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Kotzebue, Alaska. 217pp.

Selawik National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Plan, Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness Review, and Wild River Plan, Final. Record of Decision October, 1987.

APPENDIX 4

NPS administrative record on the impacts of non-local hunters/aircraft on subsistence hunting

The following summary was drafted by Western Arctic Parklands in March 2022. In 1993, the Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) and Cape Krusenstern SRC made a joint recommendation to “study the impacts of aircraft over-flights on subsistence activities and consider restrictions to mitigate any impacts. The commissions expressed concern for possible aircraft-subsistence user conflicts during the fall caribou hunt.” In 1996 the office of the Secretary of the Interior responded with the directive “The NPS should work with the commissions to identify and resolve any aircraft-subsistence user conflicts.”

In 2002, the SRCs issued additional recommendations to “consult with SRCs and publish a notice to pilots to protect subsistence use areas from aircraft over-flights during the hunting season” and to “Revise aircraft maps to protect subsistence areas.” The NPS responded in 2004, reporting that they were developing a commercial services plan based on interviews by a student researcher. With a changeover in superintendents, the focus shifted to addressing the issue by completing an ANILCA Section 810 analysis.

In 2008 the NPS shared a draft 810 analysis. The finding of the draft analysis was that “transporter operations and sport hunting have location-specific, season-specific moderate to major impacts on subsistence caribou hunting in Noatak National Preserve.” The Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly, residents of Noatak, Kotzebue IRA, Manillaq Association, Northwest Arctic RAC and Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley SRC commented on the draft 810 and unanimously agreed the effects on subsistence were understated.

After receiving that feedback on the draft analysis and in conjunction with the start up of the GMU 23 Working Group, the NPS established a moratorium on commercial use authorizations. Eight CUAs were issued from 2008-2009. In a memorandum issued May 1, 2008, the justification of the moratorium was that “growth in transportation services will only exacerbate the user conflicts,” and that “the working group will likely provide additional information that will inform future NPS decisions to address use conflicts after the moratorium has expired.” The memorandum ends with some possible methods to authorize big game transportation services including “setting a limit on the number of CUAs, and, if more applications than that number are received, selecting those to be authorized by competitive process. Alternatively, an unlimited number of CUAs may be available with operating conditions placed on all providers, or a prospectus may be issued seeking offers for one of more concession contracts.”

NPS staff began work on an Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2009. The goals of the EA were to ensure safe, high-quality transporter services, reduce impacts to park resources, minimize the impacts transporters and their clients have on subsistence uses, and provide the appropriate level of management for all hunting services in Noatak.

In 2010 the NPS attempted a competitive process for CUA Big Game Transporters. Five companies applied, five were issued CUAs and they were authorized to transport a cumulative total of 357 clients

each year. Additionally, a stipulation was added to the CUA permit to have transporters operate in a manner to avoid conflicts with subsistence hunters. However, it did not restrict where the 357 hunters could be dropped off or picked up. The outcome of the competitive process was appealed by multiple companies.

The draft EA included the following alternatives:

Alternative 1 – No Action

Alternative 2 – Limited companies and clients: 8 companies to transport no more than 357 clients (collectively) into the Preserve from August 15 – September 30.

Alternative 3 – Limited area of operation: authorize an unlimited number of big game hunter transportation companies to transport an unlimited number of clients in Noatak National Preserve excluding the Agi, Eli, and Kelly River drainages year-round.

Alternative 4 – Blend: authorize an unlimited number of big game hunter transportation companies to transport an unlimited number of clients into the Preserve. All companies would be prohibited from operating in the Agi, Eli, and Kelly River drainages until after the NPS determined that sufficient caribou have passed through these areas. NPS would determine when the first caribou have passed through these areas through ranger patrols and reports that subsistence users harvest needs were being met. NPS would authorize the companies to operate within the Agi, Eli, and Kelly River drainages after sufficient numbers of caribou had passed through these drainages.

The EA was abandoned in 2011. With a changeover in superintendents, the NPS eliminated the client cap and in 2012 addressed the issue in a change to the CUA stipulations. In a briefing statement the changes were outlined: “CUA holders will be authorized to transport caribou non-federally qualified hunters into the area west of the Kugururok River and Maiyumerak Mountains after September 15th, unless authorized by the superintendent to provide services before September 15th.”

APPENDIX 5



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

[ADF&G Home](#) • [Hunting](#) • [Unit 23 Pilot Orientation](#)

Unit 23 Pilot Orientation

Regulation (5 AAC 92.003)

In Game Management Unit (GMU) 23, a pilot may not transport parts of big game with an aircraft without having, in actual possession, a certificate of successful completion of a department-approved education course regarding big game hunting and meat transportation in this Unit. However, this provision does not apply to the transportation of parts of big game between state-maintained airports.

Purpose of This Requirement

As noted in the [Unit 23 Hunter Orientation](#), fall caribou hunting in GMU 23 has been contentious since the early 1980s. The Board received numerous proposals to expand or add new controlled use areas to further prohibit the use of aircraft associated with hunting activities. The [GMU 23 Working Group](#) proposed this pilot orientation requirement as an alternative to increased restrictions on non-local hunters. With your cooperation, this program will succeed. If conflicts are not reduced, more restrictive regulations may be required.

The Unit 23 Pilot Orientation and Quiz were designed to minimize user conflicts among local subsistence hunters, visiting hunters, guides and transporters. The purpose of these materials is to minimize the disturbance that aircraft may impose on the landscape, wildlife, and local people. Educating pilots who are either hunting or transporting hunters about ethics for operating aircraft, establishing camps, and hunting game animals is an important step in decreasing conflicts in GMU 23. This orientation deals only with the use of airplanes in off-airfield operations conducted for the purpose of hunting big game animals. It does not address Federal Aviation Administration requirements regarding flight operations.

Pilots who are not transporting big game are not required to obtain certification. However, pilots and anyone else visiting GMU 23 for any outdoor activity are encouraged to complete this orientation. The information we provide here ensures people are knowledgeable about customary practices in GMU 23 and are familiar with ways to minimize user conflicts.

What Do I Have to Do?

The law requires every pilot transporting big game by aircraft outside of state-maintained airports in GMU 23 pass the quiz found on this website with a score of 90% or higher. Once you pass, you will be able to download and print a certificate from a computer. You must sign and date this certificate. The certificate of completion must be on your person when transporting big game by aircraft in GMU 23. Once you have passed the quiz, you will not be asked to take it again. The certification will not expire.

Enforcement

This regulation will be enforced by Alaska Wildlife Troopers and by Federal law enforcement officers. Hunting on federal lands requires hunters to have all necessary licenses and tags required by the State of Alaska. NANA/Purcell security officers enforce trespassing and land use permit requirements on NANA and Borough lands.

Enforcement staff members routinely check licenses, tags, salvage of meat, antlers, cleanliness of camps, land use permits for commercial operators, and trespassing. They can also issue citations for harassment of wildlife or interfering with other hunts.



[Land Information](#)



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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Land Information

Maps and Land Status Categories in GMU 23

Land status in GMU 23 is a patchwork of requirements applied by federal, state, borough, and private land managers in this portion of Alaska. To view summaries of land status in GMU 23, please refer to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Geospatial PDF maps below. You may print these from your home computer or download them to your mobile device. Depending on the mobile device and the viewer application, you may be able to access special geospatial features. Alternatively, you may contact the BLM office in Fairbanks at 1-800-437-7021 or 907-474-2200 to receive CDs.

- [Guide Use Area 1 \(PDF 453 KB\)](#)
- [Guide Use Area 2 \(PDF 592 KB\)](#)
- [Guide Use Area 3 \(PDF 506 KB\)](#)
- [Guide Use Area 4 \(PDF 552 KB\)](#)
- [Guide Use Area 5 \(PDF 584 KB\)](#)
- [Guide Use Area 6 \(PDF 516 KB\)](#)
- [Guide Use Area 7 \(PDF 606 KB\)](#)

More information is available from:

- **Federal:** US Fish and Wildlife Service
<http://alaska.fws.gov/recreation.htm>
- **State:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game
<http://www.hunt.alaska.gov>
Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/>
- **Borough:** Northwest Arctic Borough Planning Department office (907-442-2500)
<http://www.nwabor.org/planning.html>
- **Private:** NANA Regional Corporation, Lands Department
<http://www.nana.com/regional/lands/>
<http://www.nanalands.com/plotfiles/regional/trespass.pdf> (PDF file 2.1 MB)
<http://www.nanalands.com/website/nanalands/viewer.htm>

Hunting on Federal Lands

If you will be hunting on federal lands, you must consult the [federal regulations for the harvest of wildlife on federal public lands in Alaska](#).

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lands are generally open to all (i.e., local and nonlocal) hunters. Please contact the Kotzebue office of each agency (BLM 907-442-3430; USFWS 907-442-3799) to see if current hunting restrictions exist and to get any needed federal permits.

National Park Service (NPS) land consists of parks, preserves and monuments. Hunting is generally allowed by resident (local and Alaska) and nonresident (out of state) hunters on national preserves; however, hunting is controlled by both state and federal regulations. Contact the Kotzebue NPS (907-442-3890) or ADF&G (907-442-3420) for information on hunting in the Noatak National Preserve. NPS parks and monuments are closed to hunting by the general public and are open only to federally qualified subsistence users, defined as residents of:

Communities and areas near a national park or monument which contain significant concentrations of rural residents who, without using aircraft as a means of access for purposes of taking fish or wildlife for subsistence uses, have customarily and traditionally engaged in subsistence uses within a national park or monument.

Please check the current regulations for communities and areas that qualify for the subsistence resident hunts.

Guides, Air Taxis and Transporters

The Squirrel River area is of special interest to BLM and has been identified as a "Special Recreation Management Area". Commercial aircraft must obtain a transporter permit to land on BLM-managed lands in the Squirrel River Special recreation Management Area. Guides must [obtain a permit from the BLM](#) for any use of BLM lands.

USFWS requires permits for all guides, air taxis and transporters operating in the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. You can [download the permit application](#) off of the USFWS website. All pilots should be aware that large tracts of private land exist within the refuge boundary and that these lands are not open to the public.

NANA Regional Corporation and Kikiktagruk Inupiaq Corporation (KIC) Land Use Policies

NANA lands are closed to all non-shareholders for any purpose. However, non-shareholders whom have lived in NANA communities for a minimum of five years may apply for a permit to use NANA lands. For more information on land use policies, contact NANA at 907-442-3301 or read about [NANA Regional Corporation Land Use Policies](#).

KIC Land Department has land-use policies in place to protect the corporation's resources and regulate use by non-shareholders. To obtain more information about shareholder and non-shareholder land-use policies, please contact the KIC Land Department in Kotzebue at 907-442-3165.

Noatak Controlled Use Area

The Noatak Controlled Use Area (CUA; 5AAC 92.540 [9]) consists of that portion of Unit 23 in a corridor extending five miles on either side of, and including the Noatak River, beginning at the mouth of the Noatak River, and extending upstream to the mouth of Sapun Creek. The Noatak CUA is closed from August 15 through September 30 to the use of aircraft in any manner for big game hunting, including the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game; however, this provision does not apply to the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game to and between publicly owned airports. Pilots and passengers not hunting big game may utilize the CUA for other purposes.

The big game species affected by the Noatak CUA include: bear (brown or black), caribou, moose, muskox, sheep, wolf and wolverine. Aircraft access is only allowable to and from the state-maintained airport at the village of Noatak when hunting these species. During the aircraft closure period, hunters can fly into or out of the Noatak airport then access the CUA by any means other than aircraft.

[Introduction](#)[Aircraft Use](#)



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Aircraft Use

Airstrips: Landing and Takeoff

The construction of landing strips or pads is prohibited, unless properly permitted by the Northwest Arctic Borough (NWAB) under its zoning ordinance Title 9 and federal (USFWS, NPS, BLM) or state (DNR) landowner agencies. Incidental removal of rocks and other minor obstructions may be allowed for existing landing areas, with landowner permission.

In order to reduce noise and nuisance, aircraft pilots are advised to not take off, land or drop off clients within 1.5 miles of other camps or on lakes where camps are already established. The permittee is encouraged to notify adjacent camps of activities to reduce potential user conflicts.

The GMU 23 User Conflict Working Group also recommends all pilots use measures to minimize noise, nuisance, safety, health and user conflicts affecting surrounding residential and camp properties, including minimizing excessive noise, fumes, odors, smoke, vibration, dust, litter, and waste.

Aircraft Minimums

To minimize disturbing residential and camp properties, aircraft operators should maintain a minimum altitude of two thousand (2000) feet in the vicinity of such properties unless required by weather, emergencies, or if taking off or landing.

Pilots should use flight measures to avoid or minimize disruption to caribou (especially lead animals in groups), birds, and other wildlife groupings or migrations. Recommended flight measures include: providing adequate lateral separation distances from herds and flocks, not circling herds or flocks, flying at altitudes high enough to reduce noise and disturbance, limiting the number of flights per day, and temporarily suspending flight operations to stop disturbances to wildlife.

Archaeological Resources

The pilot and passengers must not disturb any archaeological, prehistoric, historic or cultural resources during the flying/landing activities. In the event that such resources are disturbed, the pilot shall immediately contact the Planning Director at the Northwest Arctic Borough or the National Park Service.

Fueling

Fuel storage and fueling operations are regulated by state, federal and private land management authorities. It is your responsibility to be aware of all legal requirements and to ensure that fuel is not spilled or leaked into waterways or other natural areas. All fuel/oil/hazardous substance storage servicing and fueling operations are prohibited within one hundred (100) feet from any shoreline, river, drainage channel, slough and/or lake. Float planes are encouraged not to fuel away from established fueling stations. If a spill does occur, it must be reported immediately to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.



[Land Information](#)



[Reducing User
Conflicts](#)



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Reducing User Conflicts

Residents and subsistence users of GMU 23 have long had concerns about hunting traffic and aircraft operations during fall migration hunting. These concerns revolve around four major themes: noise, diverting animals from traditional migration routes, campsites that are not kept clean, and camp locations that compete with local users. The following section lists some of these concerns and recommends actions pilots can take to help minimize these problems.

1. **Concern:** Residents of Kotzebue find the constant noise from many take-offs each day objectionable.
Suggested Action: Whenever possible avoid early morning and late evening departures and use arrival and departure routes that best avoid homes and businesses.
2. **Concern:** Local hunters who live or have camps between Kotzebue and high airplane use areas, e.g. the Squirrel, Agashashok (Aggie), or lower Selawik rivers, object to the high number of overhead flights during the fall.
Suggested Action: Fly routes that avoid established camps and other hunters.
3. **Concern:** Pilots fly low over the main stem of major rivers and tributaries during fall migration. At this time, local hunters are restricted to large rivers in their boats. Local hunters object to the noise and feel that it scares animals away from the river corridors where they hunt.
Suggested Action: As safety permits, fly high or around major river corridors.
4. **Concern:** Pilots circle animals or other hunters at low altitudes to get a better look, scaring animals away from hunters on the ground and diverting animals from traditional migratory routes.
Suggested Action: Do not circle groups of animals or "scout" for animals with aircraft.
5. **Concern:** Pilots focus their efforts on migration corridors. Local hunters feel this can disrupt the migration and divert caribou away from traditional hunting areas.
Suggested Action: Avoid flying low on migration corridor routes. Also, during fall migration, avoid flying on the northern side of rivers that run east and west; this allows animals to cross the river without diverting migration.
6. **Concern:** Pilots do not allow the vanguard (lead animals) of the caribou migration to establish trails through subsistence hunting areas before starting to hunt animals for themselves and their clients. This diverts caribou away from local users.
Suggested Action: Avoid flying around or near the first animals in a group or herd. Allow the leaders to establish a trail and the migrating herd will follow.
7. **Concern:** Commercial operators using aircraft insert camps into available landing sites in specific areas, thus precluding access by other users.
Suggested Action: Avoid high concentrations of hunters and maintain a distance of at least 1.5 miles between camps.
8. **Concern:** Hunters being flown in to hunt are not advised about the need to leave camp sites clean, and transporters put too many clients in the same camp locations. This results in trash being left behind and other evidence of heavy use.
Suggested Action: Leave no trace.
 - Leave a clean camp
 - Remove all garbage
 - Burn toilet paper and bury human waste in holes six to eight inches deep at least 200 feet from water and camps; cover and disguise hole when finished.
 - Don't leave "extra" plastic tarps in the field
 - Dismantle fire rings, field table, game poles, and all site modifications
9. **Concern:** Pilots compete with local residents for choice hunting areas along major rivers especially when caribou are scarce.
Suggested Action: Fly routes that avoid established camps and other hunters.
10. **Concern:** Non-shareholders trespass on native lands and allotments.
Suggested Action: Land status maps should accompany hunters and guides in the field, information regarding landownership should be obtained prior to going into the field, and all permits need to be in possession of the transporters and hunters.
11. **Concern:** Hunters are not properly taking care of meat in the field.
Suggested Action: Hunters should follow procedures to appropriately care for their meat. In the event weather conditions change and meat care becomes difficult, consider carrying a satellite phone. Satellite phones help ensure safety but also provide an opportunity to arrange for meat pick-up without having to wait until the end of a hunt.
12. **Concern:** Unwelcomed meat is left in Kotzebue.
Suggested Action: Have a plan for what you will do with your meat once you leave the field and make this plan prior to hunting.

If you are taking meat home with you, make arrangements ahead of time for how it will be shipped and have the proper storage containers ready. If you plan on donating your meat to a resident in one of the villages or Kotzebue, make arrangements prior to hunting and fill out a transfer of possession form in the back of the ADF&G hunting regulations book.

To best avoid conflicts, be respectful and considerate of others using the outdoors, respect local customs and traditions, avoid unnecessary noise and garbage pollution, and hunt and fly in an ethical manner.

For more information on how to have a successful and enjoyable hunt, and ensure that your actions and meat care, including any intended meat donations, meet the requirements of the law, see our [general information on hunting](#) and [information specific to hunting in Unit 23](#).



[Aircraft Use](#)



[Take the Quiz](#)



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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Unit 23 Pilot Orientation Quiz

- 1: To minimize transport disturbance to surrounding residential and camp properties, it is recommended that aircraft maintain a minimum altitude of ____ feet in the vicinity of camps or communities unless required by weather, emergencies, or if taking off or landing.
- A. ☐ 5000 feet
 - B. ☐ 2000 feet
 - C. ☐ 1000 feet
 - D. ☐ 500 feet
-
- 2: Low-flying aircraft may disturb caribou and alter migration routes. How can a pilot best avoid user conflicts and disturbing animals?
- A. ☐ Fly high or around major river corridors, as safety permits.
 - B. ☐ Do not circle groups of animals or scout animals with aircraft.
 - C. ☐ Avoid flying low on migration corridors or on the north side of rivers that run east and west.
 - D. ☐ Do not fly around or near the first group of animals you see.
 - E. ☐ All of the above.
-
- 3: Which of the following lists shows the species for which hunting is restricted within the Noatak CUA?
- A. ☐ Caribou, bear, moose, fish, ptarmigan, and ducks
 - B. ☐ Caribou, bear, moose, muskox, sheep, wolf, and wolverine
 - C. ☐ Caribou, bear, moose, muskox, sheep, wolf, wolverine, and birds
 - D. ☐ Caribou, bear, and moose
-
- 4: If a fuel spill occurs, it must be
- A. ☐ Reported immediately to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
 - B. ☐ Reported immediately to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 - C. ☐ Ignored and covered up with rocks
 - D. ☐ Cleaned up as best as possible with no need to tell the land owner/manager
-
- 5: To avoid trespassing on Native allotments and lands, it is a good idea to:
- A. ☐ Carry land status maps with you while transporting hunters and while hunting.
 - B. ☐ Become familiar with and ask questions about the land status in the area you plan to hunt prior to going in the field.
 - C. ☐ Be certain to have all proper permits for the areas you wish to hunt.
 - D. ☐ All of the above choices are good ways to avoid trespassing.
-
- 6: The construction of landing strips is prohibited, unless properly permitted by the Northwest Arctic Borough under Title 9 or by federal or state landowners.
- A. ☐ False
 - B. ☐ True
-
- 7: In the event that a pilot disturbs any archaeological, prehistoric, historic or cultural resources during the flying/landing activities, the pilot shall immediately contact the:
- A. ☐ Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 - B. ☐ Historical Society
 - C. ☐ Planning Director at the Northwest Arctic Borough and the National Park Service
 - D. ☐ None of the above
-

- 8: What are the best practices to follow when vacating a camp site?
- A. ☐ Leave some supplies for the next group; they would appreciate the donation.
 - B. ☐ Don't worry about leaving some types of biodegradable items.
 - C. ☐ Leave no trace: Leave a clean camp, remove all garbage, burn toilet paper, bury human waste, and dismantle all site modifications.
 - D. ☐ Don't worry too much: When the river rises in the spring, all garbage will be carried away.
-
- 9: Which of the following statements is true?
- A. ☐ Pilots transporting parts of big game other than between state-maintained airports in GMU23 are required to obtain certification by passing this test prior to flying in the region.
 - B. ☐ Every pilot flying in GMU 23 is required to obtain certification by passing this test prior to flying in the region.
-
- 10: All fuel/oil/hazardous substance storage servicing and fueling operations are prohibited within ___ feet from any shoreline, river, drainage channel, slough and/or lake.
- A. ☐ 1000 feet
 - B. ☐ 500 feet
 - C. ☐ 100 feet
 - D. ☐ 50 feet
-
- 11: What is the appropriate minimum distance to maintain for camp separation?
- A. ☐ 0.5 miles
 - B. ☐ 1.5 miles
 - C. ☐ 2.0 miles
 - D. ☐ 4.0 miles
-
- 12: Which of the following represent ways in which a pilot can minimize disrupting other hunters?
- A. ☐ Minimize activity close to established camps or migratory areas.
 - B. ☐ Utilize measures to avoid noise and nuisance to local properties and other hunters in the field.
 - C. ☐ All of the above
 - D. ☐ None of the above
-
- 13: What are the major land status categories that occur in GMU 23?
- A. ☐ Native lands
 - B. ☐ State lands
 - C. ☐ Federal lands- USFWS (National Wildlife Refuge System), National Park System- parks, monuments, or preserves; Bureau of Land Management
 - D. ☐ Private lands
 - E. ☐ All of the above
-
- 14: The Noatak Controlled Use Areas is closed for the purposes of hunting big game species with aircraft; what is the timing window for this closure?
- A. ☐ August 1 to September 30
 - B. ☐ August 15 to September 30
 - C. ☐ At all times
 - D. ☐ August 15 to October 15
-
- 15: What Federal lands are open to hunting for the general public?
- A. ☐ BLM and USFWS
 - B. ☐ BLM, USFWS, NPS (parks, preserves, and monuments)
 - C. ☐ BLM, USFWS, NPS (preserves)
 - D. ☐ None of the above
-

- 16: As a pilot and hunter in GMU 23 it is important for me to remember:
- A. ☐ To use my airplane in any way necessary to increase hunting success for myself and others.
 - B. ☐ To be respectful and considerate to the land and people in GMU 23 when operating an aircraft or hunting; this includes minimizing disturbance around camps, subsistence users and animals to avoid user conflicts.
-
- 17: In order to reduce noise and nuisance when taking off, it is recommended that airplanes be at least how far away from existing camps?
- A. ☐ 500 feet
 - B. ☐ 1 mile
 - C. ☐ 1.5 miles
 - D. ☐ 5 miles
-
- 18: To avoid leaving unwelcomed meat in Kotzebue, you are advised to:
- A. ☐ Leave it at the airport, someone will come and get it.
 - B. ☐ Have a plan, prior to hunting, of what you will do with your meat. This includes planning ahead for how to ship your meat home, or fill out a transfer of possession form with the specific local individual who will take your donated meat.
 - C. ☐ Eat what you can and leave the rest in the field.
 - D. ☐ Ship it all home, no exceptions.
-
- 19: What Federal lands are only open to local subsistence hunters?
- A. ☐ BLM and USFWS
 - B. ☐ NPS parks and monuments
 - C. ☐ BLM, USFWS, NPS (parks, preserves, and monuments)
 - D. ☐ None of the above
-
- 20: After passing this test, where should your certificate be located and when should you have it available?
- A. ☐ The certificate should be with the pilot (i.e. on your person), and be available when transporting parts of big game animals.
 - B. ☐ The certificate should be located in my aircraft and available when hunting.
 - C. ☐ As long as I have the certificate, I do not need to carry it with me.
-
- 21: Where can you learn about the land status for an area you wish to hunt?
- A. ☐ BLM Alaska website
 - B. ☐ PDF maps in this pilot orientation
 - C. ☐ Federal and State regulations booklets online or in a local office
 - D. ☐ NANA regional corporation website
 - E. ☐ All of the above
-
- 22: Which of the following represents a better operating practice to avoid or minimize disrupting wildlife?
- A. ☐ Flying low to get a better view of migrating herds or groups of animals and landing close to migration routes to increase accessibility to animals.
 - B. ☐ Avoiding circling around herds or flocks, flying at altitudes high enough to reduce noise and disturbances, limiting the number of flights per day, landing away from migration routes, or temporarily suspending transport operations if necessary.
-
- 23: NANA and KIC lands are:
- A. ☐ Closed to all non-shareholders, no exceptions
 - B. ☐ Closed to all non-shareholders not obtaining a land use permit
 - C. ☐ Open to shareholders and non-shareholders
-
- 24: The following is a suggested course of action to avoid creating constant noise disturbance when operating aircraft.

- A. ☐ Whenever possible, avoid early morning and late evening departures and use arrival and departure routes that best avoid homes and businesses.
- B. ☐ Fly routes that avoid established camps and areas where people are hunting.
- C. ☐ Both answers a and b

[Submit Answers](#)



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Unit 23 Hunter Orientation

Fall caribou hunting in Game Management Unit (GMU or Unit) 23 in northwest Alaska has been the subject of conflict since the early 1980s, particularly between local hunters, non-local hunters and commercial operators (e.g., guides, transporters). Currently no conservation concern exists for the area's wildlife; the caribou population is healthy and hunting regulations have been modified to protect other species such as moose and sheep, which now occur at low densities and cannot sustain liberal hunts. Even so, local hunters and other residents have been concerned about high numbers of visiting hunters, the perception that they may be affecting hunting success in some areas, and the need for visiting hunters to respect traditional values and practices. Non-local hunters want access to public land and to have quality hunting experiences. Meanwhile, commercial guides and transporters want to be able to offer quality experiences to clients and operate profitable businesses.

Over the years, the Alaska Board of Game (Board) and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) listened to concerns from local subsistence hunters about the disruption of customary hunting practices by non-local hunters and associated aircraft activities. Together, these entities have undertaken several actions to try to alleviate conflicts.

The Board supported formation of a multi-stakeholder [Unit 23 Working Group and planning process](#). One result of the process was a Board-passed regulation which requires pilots transporting parts of big game to take a [pilot orientation and quiz](#), and carry a certificate with them while operating in Unit 23.

At the Board's request, ADF&G provides nonlocal hunters with orientation materials to help them hunt with minimal conflict in Unit 23. One of these is an article describing some of the conflicts and their history. ADF&G also provides a wealth of valuable online information designed to promote safe hunting, an understanding of local access issues, and good meat care for all hunters. Besides this [general hunting information](#), we recommend that you read our [additional information specific to hunting in Unit 23](#).

Our hope is that an informed public and proactive actions by transporter/pilots will reduce tensions, prevent conflicts, and preserve a premier hunting opportunity for all.



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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Game Management Unit (GMU) 23 Hunting Information

Meat Salvage

For general information regarding legal meat salvage, please refer to the Alaska Hunting Regulations. The following are some regulations with particular relevance to GMU 23.

- In GMU 23, prior to October 1, you are required to leave the meat on the ribs, front quarters and hindquarters of moose and caribou until it is brought out of the field. Meat may be boned-out once it has been transported to a state-maintained airport or may be boned-out in the field after October 1.
- You cannot hunt or help someone else take big game until after 3:00 a.m. the day following the day of flight. This does not apply if you have flown on a regularly scheduled commercial or commuter flight to a state-maintained airport.
- Weather can cause delays in field pick-up times. Caring for your meat in the field and ensuring it remains in good condition is your responsibility. Some hunters who plan to be in the field more than four or five days arrange to have their pilot check on them part way through their hunt and take the meat back to Kotzebue. If you have already taken an animal, it would be advisable for you to fly out with the meat, package it and ship it out, or donate it as quickly as possible.
- If you are sending meat to Kotzebue prior to leaving the field, be sure to fill out the 'Transfer of Possession' form, located in the back of the Alaska Hunting Regulations booklet and available through your transporter. Meat left unattended in Kotzebue is subject to dust, dogs, flies, warm temperatures and possible citation for meat salvage violations.

Prepare for Shipping and Processing Meat

- There are no commercial facilities such as a coolers, freezers or meat processing plants in Kotzebue.
- Many meat care items may not be available in Kotzebue, especially during the busy fall hunting season. Be sure to bring game bags, tarps, coolers, and shipping materials with you.
- Air cargo carriers will not accept meat that might leak blood, and they require meat to be securely packaged for shipping. If you plan to ship meat out on a wooden pallet, you will need to provide a clean tarp and have your meat bagged in plastic. The only time meat should be wrapped in plastic is when it is being shipped on an airline, not out in the field.
- Alaska Airlines may be able to sell you waterproof 'wetlock' boxes, but they often run out of them in the Kotzebue terminal.
- Check with your guide or transporter to clarify if they will provide shipping materials for you or if they can store these items for you while you are out in the field. Plan ahead for how you will get your meat home, and arrive in Kotzebue prepared.
- To contact shipping agents in Kotzebue and learn about hours of operation, call
 - Alaska Airlines: (907) 442-3477
 - Ryan Air: (907) 442-3347
 - Northern Air Cargo: (907) 442-2744
 - Everts Air Cargo: (907) 442-3702
 - ERA Aviation: (907) 442-3020
 - Bering Air: (907) 442-3187
- Be sure to schedule enough time in Kotzebue prior to flying home to process and pack your meat for shipping. Once again, there are no meat processing facilities in Kotzebue and it is your responsibility to take care of preparing, shipping, or donating your meat.

Donating Meat

Please be aware that not everyone may welcome the offer of meat, even if it has been well cared for and is in good condition. If you are unable to donate your meat, you are still legally responsible for keeping it from spoiling and should be prepared for taking it home with you.

- Consider taking your meat home instead of donating meat locally. Alaska wild game meat is lean, healthy, and organic. When compared with the cost of shipping a trophy, as well as the cost of high quality meat in the store, the price for shipping your game meat home is quite reasonable.
- Make local contacts in advance.
- Giving questionable meat away is illegal and offensive. It is the hunter's responsibility to keep meat in good condition and suitable for human consumption. If you give away spoiled meat to be used as dog food, both you and the recipient may be cited for waste.
- Your guide or transporter may have a means of getting your meat donated, but you must still fill out the 'Transfer of Possession' form when you transfer meat to your guide, transporter, or local recipient.

- In smaller villages, you can also try to contact the Tribal or City office, village store, or the post office. Again, not everyone may respond positively to the offer of meat. You must still complete the meat transfer form.
- Specifics on meat care for different species:
 - As caribou bulls go into rut, hormonal changes give their meat a strong odor and flavor. This generally occurs in early October. At that time subsistence hunters shift from taking bulls, especially large bulls, to cows or small bulls. Although there is no closed season on bull caribou, it is considered poor practice to harvest a large bull during the rut. It would be considered offensive and disrespectful to offer local people meat from a rutty bull caribou.
 - Although the rut does not affect the flavor or odor of meat from bull moose, large bulls almost stop eating at this time and quickly use up their fat reserves. At the same time, fighting and antler thrashing makes their meat tough. Additionally, moose dig rutting pits in which they urinate and wallow, and their hair becomes saturated with urine-soaked mud. It is difficult to avoid transferring the urine on the hair to the meat while butchering a rutty bull. For these reasons, most Inupiat hunters do not harvest bull moose during the rut, and as with bull caribou, it would be considered offensive and disrespectful to offer local people meat from a rutty bull moose.
 - Meat and fat from both brown and black bears is prized by residents of some inland villages in Unit 23. The law requires that only the hide and skull be salvaged from brown bears taken under general season or drawing hunts; you must salvage the meat if hunting under the brown bear subsistence registration hunt RB700. From June 1 through December 31, either the hide or the meat of black bears must be salvaged and removed from the field. However, some local residents consider it disrespectful and wasteful to leave bear meat in the field.

Respecting the Land and the Locals

While the wilderness of northwestern Alaska may feel vast and empty, it has been the homeland of the local Inupiat Eskimos for thousands of years. Each bluff, ridge, mountain, and bend in the river likely carries an ancient name and has seen thousands of years of seasonal use. Some of these lands are now privately owned by individuals or local and regional Native corporations. Please respect the rights of private landowners and don't trespass on private lands or subsistence camps, even if they do not appear to be in use. For maps and specific information regarding hunting on state, federal, and private lands please read the 'Land Information' section in the Pilot Orientation materials.

A few things to keep in mind:

- As discussed, the fall hunting season is a critical time for local subsistence hunters and their families to harvest meat. They hunt mainly using boats along major rivers and tributaries. In contrast, most visiting hunters charter airplanes to access hunting sites. Although large, smooth gravel bars make attractive landing areas for small airplanes, be aware that most good hunting locales along major rivers have probably been used by Inupiat hunters for generations. Ask your pilot-transporter not to locate you near areas used by subsistence hunters, and to avoid flying low over all hunting camps.
- There is concern by local people that the increased frequency of small planes and number of hunter camps may be altering the traditional migration patterns of the caribou. The location of villages and subsistence campsites have been chosen based on these historic routes and people fear that increasing camps and hunter numbers on the herd's routes may affect local hunters' ability to harvest their yearly meat. Once again, asking your pilot-transporter or guide to place you far from other hunters and local subsistence camps and away from other camps will help ease this tension.
- If hunting along rivers crossed by migrating caribou, camp and hunt on the opposite side from which the caribou enter the water. This helps prevent disruption of their normal movements, and keeps you from deflecting animals away from other hunters and disturbing migration patterns.

Solitude

Most hunters who come to northwest Alaska are seeking the remoteness and solitude of a wilderness hunt. Local families who have been hunting here for generations expect to hunt in a wilderness free of competition for subsistence resources. It is important to respect space and avoid close proximity to established camps and local hunters.

Guided hunters employ a guide, pay a premium price for personal and experienced guidance on where and how to hunt, and how to care for their meat and trophy. Long-time guides typically have established areas in which they drop their hunters.

'Drop-off' hunters have arranged and paid only for transportation and possible gear rental, and have the option of identifying where they would like their pilot to drop them off. Please be aware that as more air and boat transporters have entered the drop-off market in GMU 23, numbers of hunters in GMU 23 are increasing. The success and quality of everyone's wilderness hunt will be improved if transporters locate you far from all other hunters; at least 1.5 miles of camp separation are recommended.

Keeping Camp Clean

While there are established camps used year after year by local families, all temporary camps should be left as if no one had ever been there. This may mean cleaning up someone else's mess.

Please refer to the 'Leave no trace' practices described in the [general hunting information](#) and the [pilot orientation](#) for details on camp cleanliness.