

Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

c/o Office of Subsistence Management
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In Reply Refer To:
OSM.24118

January 22 2025

Tim Hammond, Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
222 University Ave.
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

Ben Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518

Dear Mr. Hammond and Mr. Mulligan,

I write to you on behalf of the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) to raise concerns regarding the availability of accurate baseline population estimates for moose in Unit 20F.

The Council represents subsistence harvesters of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands and waters in the Eastern Interior Alaska Region. It was established by the authority in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Section 805 of ANILCA and the Council's charter establishes the Council's authority to initiate, review, and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region.

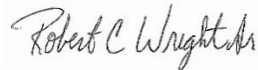
The Council held a public meeting on October 8-10, 2024, in Fairbanks. During the meeting, the ADF&G Fairbanks Area Biologist provided an overview of the status of moose in Unit 20F which we greatly appreciated. During his presentation, the Council was notified that there has never been an aerial population survey completed for moose in this unit. Although we can understand that the low-density population and lower hunting effort in Unit 20F contributes to surveys there being a lower priority than in other high density/ high effort hunts in the Fairbanks area, we were quite surprised that aerial surveys had never been done at all and that no baseline population counts are available. The Council feels that this is an important data gap that needs to be filled.

Although moose density and hunt effort may be relatively low compared to other areas, moose in Unit 20F are nevertheless a very important subsistence resource, especially to the communities of Tanana and Rampart. In recent years, residents of these communities have reported to the Council that there are less moose in the area than there used to be and that it requires more effort to harvest them. Unit 20F is easily accessible from the Dalton Highway and Yukon River Bridge, which also leads to increased competition among local and non-local hunters for these limited moose. Compounded with salmon fishing closures, this has created significant hardships on local residents.

The Council kindly requests that the BLM and ADF&G work together to explore opportunities for funding baseline moose surveys in Unit 20F. It would be wonderful if this could also be done in collaboration with Tanana and Rampart Tribes, which may be able to pursue Tribal Wildlife Grants otherwise unavailable to your agencies.

The Council thanks you for considering our request and appreciates your efforts to manage and monitor this important resource. If you have any questions or would like to follow up, please contact me through our Subsistence Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid, at (907) 891-9181 or brooke_mcdavid@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,



Robert "Charlie" Wright, Sr.
Chair

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Mark Burch, Assistant Director of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Jim Herriges, Wildlife Biologist, Bureau of Land Management Eastern Interior Field Office
Administrative Record