



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

Federal Subsistence Board

1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503 - 6199



FOREST SERVICE

OSM 20108.KD

AUG 12 2020

Jack Reakoff, Chair
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Chairman Reakoff,

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) met on April 20-23 and April 27, 2020 via teleconference to consider proposed changes to Federal subsistence management regulations for the harvest of wildlife on Federal public lands in Alaska. This letter provides a report on the actions taken by the Board on Wildlife Proposals (WP) and Wildlife Closure Reviews (WCR) affecting residents of the Western Interior Alaska region.

Section 805(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) provides that the Board will accept the recommendations of a Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) regarding take unless, (1) the recommendation is not supported by substantial evidence, (2) the recommendation violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or (3) adopting the recommendation would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs. When a Council's recommendation is not adopted, the Board is required by Secretarial regulations to set forth the factual basis and reasons for the decision.

Out of 54 proposals submitted, one proposal, **(WP20-21)** was withdrawn by the proponent. The Board agreed with the recommendations of the Councils, in whole or with modifications, on 48 of 54 proposals. The Board deferred **WP20-26**, which would allow for the use of snowmachines to assist in positioning wolves or wolverines in Units 9B, 9C, 17B, and 17C, until its summer 2020 work session. Furthermore, the Board accepted the recommendations of the Councils on all 17 WCR's, voting to maintain status quo on 13 of them. Details of these actions and the Board deliberations are contained in the meeting transcriptions. Copies of the transcripts may be obtained by calling the toll free number 1-800-478-1456, and are available online at the Federal Subsistence Management Program website, <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence>.

The Board uses a consensus agenda on those proposals where there is agreement among the affected Council(s), a majority of the Interagency Staff Committee, and the Alaska Department of Fish and

Game concerning a proposed regulatory action. These proposals were deemed non-controversial and did not require a separate discussion. The consensus agenda contained one proposal affecting the Western Interior Alaska Region, which the Board deferred to the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council as follows: the Board *rejected* statewide proposal, **WP20-08**, which required traps or snares to be marked with a name or state identification number.

The remaining proposals affecting the Western Interior Alaska Region appeared on the non-consensus agenda. For five of the proposals the Board took action consistent with the Council's recommendations: the Board *adopted* **WP20-27** to allow for the use of snowmachines to assist in the take of caribou in Unit 17 and **WP20-46** to revise caribou hunting seasons and restrictions in Unit 23. The Board took *no action* on **WP20-43/44/45** due to the action taken on WP20-46. The Board also deferred to the Council's recommendations on WP20-36/37 by *adopting with modification* **WP20-36** to establish a March to-be-announced moose season in a portion of Unit 21D, and to require State registration permits in Unit 21D, and took *no action* on **WP20-37** due to action taken on WP20-36.

The Board's actions on three Wildlife Closure Reviews (WCR) for the region were also consistent with the Council's recommendations. The Board *adopted* **WCR20-20** to *retain status quo* for moose hunting in the Kanuti Controlled Use Area in Unit 24B; *eliminated the closure* in **WCR20-39** for moose hunting in Unit 19A "east"; and *modified the closure* in **WCR20-43** for moose hunting in Unit 19A, remainder, by eliminating the closure within the Lime Village Management Area, while retaining the closure in the rest of the hunt area.

The Board appreciates the Council's active involvement in and diligence with the regulatory process. The ten Councils continue to be the foundation of the Federal Subsistence Management Program, and the stewardship shown by the Council chairs and their representatives at the Board meeting was truly admirable.

If you have any questions regarding the summary of the Board's actions, please contact Karen Deatherage, Council Coordinator, at 907-474-2270 or karen_deatherage@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Anthony Christianson
Chair

Enclosure

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council members
Sue Detwiler, Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Thomas Doolittle, Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Lisa Maas, Acting Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Tom Kron, Acting Council Coordination Division Supervisor,
Office of Subsistence Management
Karen Deatherage, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD 805(c) REPORT

April 20-24 and April 27, 2020

via teleconference, Alaska

Section 805(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act provides that the “Secretary ... shall consider the report and recommendations of the regional advisory councils concerning the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within their respective regions for subsistence uses.” The Secretary has delegated authority to issue regulations for the take of fish and wildlife to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board). Pursuant to this language in Section 805(c), the Board defers to the Subsistence Regional Advisory Council’s (Council) recommendations. However, Section 805(c) also provides that the Board “may choose not to follow any recommendations which [it] determines is not supported by substantial evidence, violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs.” The purpose of this report is to detail how the Board’s action differed from the Council’s recommendations based on these criteria.

WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA REGION CROSSOVER WILDLIFE PROPOSALS (WP)

WP20-26

DESCRIPTION: WP20-26 requests that Federally qualified subsistence users be allowed to use a snowmachine to position wolves and wolverines for harvest on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in Units 9B, 9C, 17B, and 17C, provided the animals are not shot from a moving snowmachine. Submitted by: Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

BOARD ACTION: **Defer until the August 2020 Board meeting.**

JUSTIFICATION: The Board discussed the challenges of implementing this regulation only on Bureau of Land Management lands in the region, which would create a disconnect in Federal regulations on adjoining National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands. To avoid confusion and regulatory complexity, the Board suggested the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council resume their working group discussions with their public and Tribal partners and work with the Office of Subsistence Management and Interagency Staff Committee to develop clear regulatory language that may be acceptable across all Federal lands in the region. The Board will defer taking action on this proposal until the August 2020 Board meeting at which time they will discuss further details on this issue provided by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council working group.