

**PROPOSAL 62 – 5 AAC 92.123(a)(1). Intensive Management Plans VII.** Reauthorize the Unit 19A predation control program as follows:

**5AAC 92.123. Intensive Management Plans VII.**

(a) **Plans established.** Intensive management plans for the following areas are established in this section:

(1) Unit 19(A) Predation Control Area;

...

**(b) Unit 19(A) Predation Control Area: the Unit 19(A) Predation Control Area is established and consists of those portions of the Kuskokwim River drainage within Unit 19(A), encompassing approximately 10,048 square miles; this predator control program does not apply within National Park Service or National Wildlife Refuge lands unless approved by the federal agencies; notwithstanding any other provision in this title, and based on the following information contained in this section, the commissioner or the commissioner's designee may conduct a wolf and black bear and brown bear population reduction or a wolf and black bear and brown bear population regulation program in Unit 19(A) to benefit moose:**

**(1) the following Wolf and Bear Predation Control Focus Areas are established in the Unit 19(A) Predation Control Area; the areas do not delineate a moose, wolf, or bear population and are not intended to distinguish animals within the areas from populations in Unit 19(A); the purpose is to focus wolf and bear control in a relatively small area where moose numbers can be better estimated, where moose are accessible to hunters, and where harvest can be closely monitored;**

**(A) the Wolf Predation Control Focus Area (WCFA) encompasses approximately 3,905 square miles within all Unit 19(A) drainages of the Kuskokwim River upstream from and including the Holitna River Drainage; wolf control will be conducted only within the WCFA; the department has the discretion to adjust the area's size and shape to include up to approximately 4,000 square miles of Unit 19(A);**

**(B) the Black Bear and Brown Bear Predation Control Focus Area (BCFA) encompasses approximately 534 square miles consisting of those portions of the Kuskokwim River drainage within the area starting at Sleetmute at 61° 42.00' N. lat., 157° 10.00' W. long., then east to 61° 42.00' N. lat., 157° 00.00' W. long., then north to 61° 44.00' N. lat., 157° 00.00' W. long., then east to 61° 44.00' N. lat., 156° 55.00' W. long., then north to 61° 46.00' N. lat., 156° 55.00' W. long., then east to 61° 46.00' N. lat., 156° 50.00' W. long., then north to 61° 48.00' N. lat., 156° 50.00' W.**

long., then east to 61° 48.00' N. lat., 156° 45.00' W. long., then north to 61° 50.00' N. lat., 156° 45.00' W. long., then east to 61° 50.00' N. lat., 156° 30.00' W. long., then south to 61° 40.00' N. lat., 156° 30.00' W. long., then west to 61° 40.00' N. lat., 156° 45.00' W. long., then south to 61° 18.00' N. lat., 156° 45.00' W. long., then west to 61° 18.00' N. lat., 157° 15.00' W. long., then north to 61° 24.00' N. lat., 157° 15.00' W. long., then east to 61° 24.00' N. lat., 157° 10.00' W. long., then north to 61° 42.00' N. lat., 157° 10.00' W. long; bear control will be conducted only within the BCFA; the department has the discretion to adjust the area's size and shape up to approximately 800 square miles of Unit 19(A); the BCFA is mostly within the WCFA;

(2) this is a continuing control program that was first authorized by the board in 2004 for wolf control, with bear control added by the board in 2012; it is currently designed to increase moose numbers and harvest in the WCFA and BCFA by reducing predation on moose and is expected to make a contribution to achieving the intensive management (IM) objectives in Unit 19(A);

(3) moose, wolf, black bear, and brown bear objectives are as follows:

(A) the IM population objective established by the board for Units 19(A) and 19(B) is 13,500–16,500 moose; based on the relative sizes of the two units, the proportional population objective for Unit 19(A) alone is 7,600–9,300 moose; the IM moose harvest objective for Units 19(A) and 19(B) is 750–950 moose annually; the proportional harvest objective for Unit 19(A) alone is 400–550 moose annually;

(B) the density objective for moose in the BCFA is 2.0 per square mile (corrected for sightability) during late winter surveys; the annual moose harvest objective for the WCFA is 120 moose;

(C) the post-control wolf population objective for Unit 19(A) is 25–30; the pre-control wolf population in Unit 19(A) was estimated in winter 2006–2007 at 125–150; the minimum of 25 wolves is approximately an 80 percent reduction from the pre-control population and will ensure that wolves persist in the plan area;

(D) the wolf control objective in the WCFA is to reduce wolf numbers to the lowest level possible; the pre-control estimate within the WCFA in winter 2006–2007 was 75–100;

(E) the black bear control objective in the BCFA is to reduce black bear numbers to the lowest level possible; the pre-control black bear population in Unit 19(A) was estimated at 2,500–3,000; the pre-control estimate within the BCFA was 135–160; because the BCFA is a relatively small geographic area, removing black bears from within it will have only a minor effect on the black bear population in Unit 19(A);

**(F) the brown bear control objective in the BCFA is to reduce brown bear numbers to the lowest level possible; the pre-control brown bear population in Unit 19(A) was estimated at 180–210; the pre-control estimate within the BCFA in was 10–15; because the BCFA is a relatively small geographic area, removing brown bears from within it will have only a minor effect on the brown bear population in Unit 19(A);**

**(4) board findings concerning populations and human use are as follows:**

**(A) the Unit 19(A) moose population and harvest IM objectives have not been achieved;**

**(B) the BCFA objectives for moose density and moose harvest have not been achieved;**

**(C) predation by wolves and bears is an important cause of the failure to achieve population and harvest objectives;**

**(D) a reduction of wolf and bear predation within the WCFA and BCFA can reasonably be expected to make progress towards achieving the Unit 19(A) IM objectives;**

**(E) reducing predation is likely to be effective and feasible using recognized and prudent active management techniques and based on scientific information;**

**(F) reducing predation is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns;**

**(5) authorized methods and means are as follows:**

**(A) hunting and trapping of wolves and hunting of black bears and brown bears by the public in Unit 19(A) during the term of this program may occur as provided in the hunting and trapping regulations set out elsewhere in this title, including use of motorized vehicles;**

**(B) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may allow department employees to conduct aerial, land and shoot, or ground based lethal removal of wolves and black bears and brown bears using state owned, privately owned, or chartered equipment, including helicopters, under AS 16.05.783;**

**(C) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may issue public aerial shooting permits or public land and shoot permits using fixed-wing aircraft as a method of wolf removal under AS 16.05.783;**

**(6) time frame is as follows:**

**(A) through June 30, 2020, the commissioner may authorize removal of wolves and black bears and brown bears in Unit 19(A);**

**(B) annually, the department shall, to the extent practicable, provide to the board a report of program activities conducted during the preceding 12 months, including implementation activities, the status of the moose, wolf and bear populations, and recommendations for changes, if necessary to achieve the objectives of the plan;**

**(7) the commissioner will review, modify or suspend program activities as follows:**

**(A) when wolf surveys or accumulated information from department personnel, hunters, trappers, and permittees indicate the need to avoid reducing wolf numbers in Unit 19(A) below the control objective of 25–30 wolves specified in this subsection;**

**(B) when the moose density and harvest objectives within the BCFA specified in this subsection are achieved.**