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ADF&G Boards Support Section
ATTN: Board of Game Comments
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Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Kawerak, Inc. is the regional non-profit tribal consortium of the Bering Strait Region. Kawerak's Board of Directors is comprised of the Presidents of the 20 tribes of the Bering Strait Region. Kawerak offers numerous programs and services to the 16 communities in the region. We offer the following recommendations to the Board of Game regarding proposals up for consideration at the January 2017 meeting.

Kawerak has reviewed the proposal book and is in support of the following Board of Game Proposals.

Prop. 18: Brown/Grizzly bear tag fee exemptions. Reauthorize resident tag fee exemptions for Brown/Grizzly Bear in GMU 18, 22, 23, and 26A.

Prop. 26: Hunting seasons and bag limit for moose - Lengthen the season for Moose in GMU 22A Unalakleet River Drainage.

Currently the season is September 1-14 and the quota of 22 moose is not met by the current closure date. Extension of the date by Emergency Order has been requested by local residents to September 20 and by doing so the quota is met. Extending the date to September 20 in regulation will align the current practice allowed by the Emergency Order.

Prop. 28: Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose - Eliminate the nonresident moose hunt in GMU 22E & D Remainder.

Support but with an amendment for 22D Remainder only. We suggest to eliminate the non-resident hunt in 22D Remainder and also to shorten the season dates in the general season resident hunt as follows: Date of September 1-14, October 1-31, December 1 - January 15. Current season for residents is August 10-September 14, October 1-November 30, December 1-January 31. According to ADF&G data, moose populations in 22D Remainder have been decreasing at a rate of about 14% annually due to harvest. Bull to cow ratio has been decreasing. Small incremental changes by eliminating the nonresident harvest quota and reducing resident harvest dates may help maintain the moose population in this unit.

Proposal 30: Hunting seasons and bag limits for Brown/Grizzly Bear in GMU 22C.

Lengthen the hunting season for brown/grizzly bear in GMU 22C from May 1-31 to April 1-May 31. Latest data from ADG&G & NPS as presented during earlier meetings by local ADF&G staff indicates there is an increasing number of Brown Bear. With the increasing number of Brown Bear there is lost opportunity to harvest due to calendar dates and the variability of spring change.

Proposal 31: Hunting season and bag limits for Brown/Grizzly Bear in GMU 22B.

Increase the bag limit for brown/grizzly bear in GMU 22B from 1 bear every year to 2 bears every year. Latest data from ADF&G & NPS indicates there is an increasing number of brown/grizzly bear on the Seward Peninsula. Due in part to the high number of bears the moose population has had a hard time recovering as calf recruitment is low. This proposal if adopted will address multiple species.

Proposal 32: Hunting seasons and bag limits for Brown/Grizzly Bear.

Lengthen the season for Brown/Grizzly Bear in GMU 22A from August 1-May 31 to August 1-June 15. Traditional knowledge along with citizen science suggests an increase in the bear population. Current harvest rate is sustainable and a longer season extension of two weeks should not have any negative impacts and would allow for the variability of spring change. With the increasing number of bear this proposal if adopted will give more opportunity to harvest from an ever increasing population.

For further information on the above comments contact Subsistence Resources Program Director, Brandon Ahmasuk at 907-443-4265 or email him directly at sub.dir@kawerak.org

Sincerely,

KAWERAK, INC.



Melanie Bahnke, President