



# MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

## Fish & Wildlife Commission

### Planning and Land Use Department

### Planning Division

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**DATE-** February 17, 2022

**RE:** Mat-Su Moose Management

Doug Vincent-Lang  
Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**Cc:** Director Edward Grasser, Regional Supervisor Gino Del Frate, Area Management Biologist Tim Peltier

Dear Commissioner Vincent-Lang,

I would like to extend our appreciation for your staff taking the time on December 16, 2021 to meet with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC). Your staff, consisting of Gino Del Frate, Tim Peltier and Todd Rinaldi provided us an in-depth review of the status and management of moose populations within the Mat-Su Borough. Before I get into the main theme of this letter, I would like to provide you with a brief summary of this Commission.

The MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission, formerly the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Sportsmen's Committee, was formed in February 2007 to represent the interests of the Borough in the conservation and allocation of fish, wildlife and habitat.

The commission advises the MSB Assembly and the State of Alaska Boards of Fish and Game regarding fish and wildlife practices and policies that affect the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

The commission consists of eight representatives, to include Chair Mike Wood, Vice Chair Andy Couch, Assembly members Tim Hale and Jesse Sumner, Larry Engel, Howard Delo, Kendra Zamzow, Peter Probasco, and ex-officio member Jim Sykes. Staff support is provided by MSB employee, Ted Eischeid.

The presentation Area Biologist Tim Peltier provided was well organized and easily understood. Upon completion of his presentation, a question-and-answer dialogue proceeded and if it wasn't for the time constraints of the meeting, would have lasted much longer. **Commission members learned the Department's most recent moose population estimates listed subunit 14B (November 2021) below population objective range, subunit 14A (December 2020) above**

**population objective, subunit 16A (December 2020) within population objective, and subunit 16B (February 2018 south /February 2019 north / November 2020 - middle) as above population objective -- but with concerns about how the past two deep snow winters may have changed population status.** Concerns and questions were raised focusing on survey techniques and frequency, declining numbers from the twinning surveys, as well as the concern of overharvesting the female population.

The FWC believes the current female harvest is too liberal and that local depletion within these two management units has occurred. We also learned that the best method to approach this concern is not to pursue the closure of these antlerless hunts, but to work with ADF&G who has the management authority within a given year to either reduce permits numbers or elect not to hold that hunt.

Antlerless moose hunts during November and December create the most concern for commission members, and we recommend when a moose population is within or below management objective in subunit 16A, 16B, 14A, or 14B -- or trending downward in a manner that could drop a population below a subunit objective -- please consider achieving each subunit's minimum population threshold as a top Department priority. We recommend reducing antlerless moose permits, whenever necessary, to achieve each of these Mat-Su Valley population objective thresholds, with the understanding that some years no permits may be issued for one or more specific hunts in order to achieve population objective(s). We hope you agree that maximum benefit from our valuable Mat-Su Valley moose resource is best achieved when moose populations are maintained above minimum objectives in all Mat-Su Valley game management subunits.

In addition, the FWC encourages ADF&G to address concerns raised by residents of Unit 14A and make it illegal to harvest a cow moose that is accompanied by the current year's calf. This would seem to follow ADF&G's concerns that an orphaned calf generally has a reduced chance of survival in the presence of predators and deep snow winters and as expressed in the letter sent by the Palmer ADF&G office to antlerless moose permit holders; "*We encourage you to select a cow moose that is not accompanied by the current year's calf. An orphaned calf generally has a reduced chance of survival...*". This would also mirror regulations which describe "Legal Moose", e.g., Units 7, 13A, 15C and 20A for example.

We look forward to continuing working with your staff and appreciated their stated willingness to do so. Your response would be greatly appreciated.

Best Regards,



Mike Wood, Chair

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission

**Formal Motion Adopted by the FWC on 12/16/2021:**

*That the FWC communicate to the Commissioner of Fish and Game, and Director of Wildlife Conservation, requesting the Department reduce antlerless moose permits for the months of November and December, whenever a moose population in Unit 14A or the following adjoining Game Management Unit(s) (13A, 14B, 14C, 16A, 16B) is below moose population objective levels.*