

H B

1 6 5

Introduced: 4/9/85
Referred: Resources and
Finance

*trans to Zarembo
or other appropriate
locations*

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY TAYLOR AND SUND

2

SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 165

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

FOURTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to the transplanting of elk."

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

8 * Section 1. The Department of Fish and Game shall, over the next three

9 years, cooperate with and assist in the transplanting to Zarembo Island of

10 up to 50 but not less than 10 elk during the fiscal year ending June 30,

11 1986, up to 50 but not less than 10 elk during the fiscal year ending

12 June 30, 1987 and up to 50 but not less than 10 elk during the fiscal year

13 ending June 30, 1988. The department shall utilize the services of volun-

14 teers, organizations and groups to accomplish this transplanting whenever

15 possible. The department is authorized to enter into agreements with simi-

16 lar agencies in other states to facilitate this transplant.

*Provided there shall not be taken
from -
or other appropriate location
in Alaska*

8

*attempted transplants
when elk + deer cohabit - cooperate
co-exist Podrako*

Field studies - criteria for feasibility study

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

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May, 1986

Copies of minutes listed below were originally included in this file. The minutes are available on the STAIRS date base CM 14. In order to save space copies of minutes have not been left in the files.

Jeanie Henry

SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE, 5/1/85, 3:40 pm

Alaska State Legislature

ARLISS STURGULEWSKI, Chairman
BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Vice Chairman
JACK COGHILL
DICK ELIASON
VIC FISCHER
RICK HALFORD
FRED ZHAROFF



POUCH V
JUNEAU, ALASKA. 99811
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Senate Committee on Resources

MEMORANDUM

May 3, 1985

TO: All Members
Senate Resources Committee

FROM: Staff *HF*
Senate Resources Committee

RE: SSHB 165 "An Act relating to the transplanting of elk; and providing for an effective date."

SSHB 165 would allow for the transplant of up to 50 elk over the next three years to Zarembo Island near Wrangell, Alaska.

The Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service have agreed to undertake a joint study of the feasibility of introducing elk to Southeast Alaska.

The legislation is supported by local sports groups, particularly the Alaska Sports and Wildlife Club of Ketchikan.

SSHB 165 passed the House by a vote of 30 yeas and 8 nays.

Enclosures:

1. Bill analysis by the Department of Fish and Game
2. Letter from Alaska Sports and Wildlife Club supporting transplanar
3. Minutes of House Finance Committee hearing on HB 165 and HB 166
4. Research report on transplanting elk to Southeast Alaska by House Research Agency



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
BILL ANALYSIS

DEPARTMENT Fish and Game	DIVISION Game	BILL NUMBER SSHB 165	SPONSOR Taylor-Sund
DEPARTMENT POSITION Neutral			
PREPARED BY Robert Hinman	DATE 4/17/85	COMMISSIONER'S SIGNATURE <i>Conrad B. Jensen</i>	DATE 4/17/85

SUMMARY

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED BY BILL U.S. Forest Service	CONSTITUENT GROUP(S) AFFECTED BY BILL Sportsmen's groups, Advisory committee Environmental groups
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BILL Sitka and Ketchikan sportsmen's groups Alaska loggers	ORGANIZATIONAL OPPOSITION TO BILL Unknown

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE FISCAL NOTE ATTACHED

BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE INTENT
Various groups, particularly the sportsmen's group from Ketchikan have supported a transplant of Roosevelt Elk to southeastern Alaska. This bill would mandate such an introduction.

ANALYSIS OF BILL/PROGRAM EFFECTS
Prior to transplanting elk or any other species, permission must be granted by the land managing agency--in this case, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The Forest Service has indicated that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be necessary and possibly an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if the EA indicates that a more detailed evaluation is necessary. Board of Game policy is that an introduction or transplant of wildlife must be preceded by an analysis indicating that sufficient habitat exists to sustain the species, that the transplant would not adversely affect indigenous species, and that the transplant would likely serve a useful purpose. The department and the USFS have met and agreed upon proposed criteria (attached) for a feasibility study. The Commissioner has agreed with the USFS Regional Forester to work cooperatively in developing a plan for the feasibility study. Among the questions to be addressed are the potential effects on indigenous Sitka blacktail deer. Because predator-prey relationships, forage availability, and other factors may affect the (continued)

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED
Line 9: years, (COOPERATE and assist in the) Transplant(ING) to Zarembo Island or other appropriate location in southeastern Alaska (OF)

Delete last sentence, lines 15 and 16: the department already has this authority.

success of a proposed transplant, it is desirable to evaluate more than one possible transplant location.

The department is not currently funded to conduct the necessary feasibility study. Work of this type can be conducted over a period of years in conjunction with existing research and management activities. In this way, costs could be minimized, but a substantial period of time would be necessary. To conduct the work over a shorter period would require additional funding. Assuming the study indicates that the transplant is feasible, funding to cover the actual transport of animals (and related costs) would be needed.

INTRODUCTION OF ELK INTO SOUTHEAST ALASKA
PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY

The following criteria should be addressed when conducting a feasibility study on the introduction of elk onto public lands in Southeast Alaska:

1. Consider possible implications of introducing elk to Southeast Alaska.
 - a. Biological implications
 - b. Ecological implications
 - c. Recreational implications
 - d. Economical implications
 - (1) Estimate of cost/benefit
2. Consider potential types of public use.
 - a. Sport hunting
 - b. Non-consumptive
3. Consider attitudes of people in Southeast Alaska towards introducing elk.
 - a. Public sectors
 - b. State and Federal agencies
4. Compliance with agency policies, direction, and regulations.
 - a. State of Alaska, Department of Fish and Game
 - b. USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region
5. Historical Record of Elk Introductions to Southeast Alaska.
 - a. Literature review
 - b. Past experience and results
6. Biological and Habitat Relationships
 - a. Suitability of habitats for elk
 - (1) Winter ranges-optimum/minimum acres
 - (2) Summer ranges-optimum/minimum acres
 - (3) Effect of timber harvest on elk habitat
 - b. Forage availability (quantity, quality, forage species)
 - (1) Winter range
 - (2) Summer range

- c. Habitat competition with other species
 - (1) Forage competition
 - (2) Space-competition
 - (3) Reproduction/breeding
- d. Biological potential for elk in Southeast Alaska
 - (1) Subspecies most suitable to Southeast Alaska
 - (2) Availability of transplant stock
 - (3) Habitat adaptability of the animal
 - (4) Reproduction
 - (5) Survival/mortality
- e. Predator/Prey Relationships
 - (1) Effects of predation on Elk
 - (2) Potential problems with other species
- f. Diseases and Parasites
 - (1) Potential problems with elk populations
 - (2) Potential problems with other species
- g. Land Use/Habitat Relationships
 - (1) Effect of timber harvest on public and native lands on habitat utilization by elk
 - (2) Effect of State land disposal activities

7. Management of the Elk Populations in Southeast Alaska.

- a. Mobility of the animals-likelihood of expansion to other areas outside the original transplant site.
- b. Population Management - regulations needed to maintain population size and areas occupied to meet management objectives
- c. Potentials for Animal Damage
 - (1) Land Use Conflicts - public and private lands

The following is a proposed budget assuming a transplant from Afognak Island. The budget will change depending on the origin of the animals and other factors. Volunteer labor and donation could offset part of the cost.

Helicopter time for animal capture	18,000
Transport of animal Kodiak-Wrangell	15,000
Materials for capture and transport	4,500
Unloading and release	4,000
Spotter plane to locate animals	4,500
Travel and per diem	<u>3,000</u>
	\$49,000

This does not include funding to follow-up and monitor the success of the transplant.

ALASKA SPORTS *and* WILDLIFE CLUB

P.O. Box 5122 • Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Dear Prospective Member:

Thank you for your interest in our organization. The Alaska Sports & Wildlife Club is comprised of individuals who strive to help improve and protect our natural resources.

To give you a little history of our Club, it was organized in 1947 when our deer population started to decline and the wolf population increased. We requested and worked with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife on predator controls and feeding the remaining deer by cutting cedar boughs. We started the program of building skiffs and placing them at popular sportfishing lakes. In later years, we worked with the U.S.F.S. in building and maintaining recreational cabins on many of the lakes in the Ketchikan and Craig areas. The Club was founder of the Ketchikan King Salmon Derby and for years has been a strong advocate of predator control for proper management.

We support Senator Ted Stevens' bill S49, changing National Parks to preserve status for sports hunting. We are totally opposed to special interest groups trying to monopolize land for their exclusive use, such as Outfitter/Guide camps on Federal Land.

In 1982, we proposed an establishment of Mountain Goat on Revilla Island. In the summer of 1983, with the help of A.D.F. & G., the U.S. Forest Service and public support, it was accomplished, with our organization sponsoring \$25,000.00. Aerial count in 1984 shows six new kids born.

Member of Alaska Wildlife Federation and Sportsman's Council, Ron Sommerville (Executive Director) and Affiliate Member of the National Rifle Association supports our long-range goals.

Presently, the Alaska Sports and Wildlife Club is campaigning to arouse public support for a Roosevelt Elk Transplant in the Southern Panhandle area. We advocate the establishment of an Elk herd that will be accessible to the hunters in Southeast Alaska. We feel this herd should be placed in the vicinity of North Prince of Wales, Etolin or Zarembo Islands. The Afognak Island Elk herd was established in 1928 with eight Elk and today is estimated at six herds of nine hundred animals. We believe we could have an Elk herd in Southeast Alaska, if, with public support, we act NOW.

Thank you.

Dick Borch

Dick Borch, President
Bob DeWitt, Vice-President
Terry Myser, Secretary-Treasurer

Board of Directors:

Terry Clark	Art McMahon
Ken Eichner	Paul McGarrigan
Gary Emard	Earl Mossburg
Art Hack	Dr. Ron Tokar
Jonny Gilbert	

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 17, 1985

1:30 p.m.

(Tape HFC 85-41, Side 2, #324)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adams called the meeting of the House Finance Committee to order at 1:30 p.m. and informed members they would be considering HB 147, HB 165, HB 166, HB 236 and HB 185.

PRESENT

All members of the committee were present. ALSO PRESENT: Representative Taylor; Commissioner Rudd, Department of Administration; Ron Williams, Alaska Native Brotherhood; Barry Best; Bob Dawkins, Political Action Committee United Black Community; Merwin Peters, Director, Equal Employment Opportunity, Department of Administration; and Roland Shanks, Special Assistant, Department of Fish and Game.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

- HB 147 An Act creating a Division of Equal Employment Opportunity in the Department of Administration.
- Bill assigned to a subcommittee consisting of Representative Duncan, Chair; Representative Szymanski and Representative Rieger.
- HB 165 An Act relating to the transplanting of elk; and providing for an effective date.
- Bill reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation.
- HB 166 An Act making a special appropriation to the Department of Fish and Game; and providing for an effective date.
- Bill reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation.
- HB 185 An Act relating to student loans; and providing for an effective date.
- Loans Committee Substitute reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and zero fiscal note.

most states in the Union have statutory authority provided to their EEO Division in state government and Alaska, usually a forefront leader, should provide the same statutory authority. Mr. Best said there is a great need for the legislation. He said most Divisions in state government have statutory authority and EEO is generally last in line for financial and human resources and now statutory authority. Mr. Best did not feel this was the type of signal Alaska wanted to project around the nation. Mr. Best said the EEO issue is not only a minority issue but protects everyone. He said because of the size of state government, and limited staff of the Division, it is important to provide the Director with some type of authority in the complaints process area. Mr. Best said the Director needs some teeth to back up decisions and would hope the bill would provide this emphasis.

BOB DAWKINS, POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE UNITED BLACK COMMUNITY, said he worked with the committee on HB 147 from its inception. Mr. Dawkins felt that it was important to provide the Division with statutory authority putting "teeth" into the Division. He said the members of the community which he represented supported the bill.

Representative Szymanski asked Mr. Merwin Peters if he agreed with the policy regarding enforcement. MERWIN PETERS, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY, DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION, said it was his understanding that the enforcement issue was added by the State Affairs Committee and the intent was not to become an enforcement agency. He said the Division currently follows an informal method of resolution of complaints of discrimination in state government as other agencies exist to provide enforcement against discriminatory practices.

HB 147 was HELD in committee for review by a subcommittee consisting of Representative Duncan, Chair; Representative Rieger and Representative Szymanski.

HB 165 and HB 166

HB 165 - An Act relating to the transplanting of elk; and providing for an effective date.

HB 166 - An Act making a special appropriation to the Department of Fish and Game; and providing for an effective date.

Chairman Adams said the bill would facilitate the transplanting of elk to Zarembo Island for hunting. He said HB 165 had been rewritten by Representative Taylor to allow that only 10 elk per year be sent to Zarembo Island, for the Department of Fish and Game to utilize volunteer services and for the Department to work with other states. He said HB 166 currently appropriates \$50,000 for the transplant.

REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR, PRIME SPONSOR OF THE BILL, felt the bill self explanatory. He said the analysis by the Department of Fish and Game appeared negative and believed it was due to a policy decision from past years in which the Department established there would be no transplanting. He said only large species have been transplanted by the federal government or through the Federal Fish and Wildlife group. Representative Taylor said constituents of Southeast asked that the issue be brought before the Legislature. He said one participating group last year raised \$25,000 and with volunteer efforts transplanted a herd of goats to Revilla Island. He said the herd is healthy and doing well. With regard to the need for an environmental assessment, Representative Taylor said the Forest Service is enthused about the transplant and believe it could be accomplished with a smaller statement than an environmental assessment. He said they had entered into a protocol for proposed criteria for a feasibility study with the Department of Fish and Game. He did not feel the transplant would require a lengthy study of the feasibility and environmental impact as proposed by the Department of Fish and Game. Representative Taylor discussed other transplant efforts. He said the fiscal impact of the bill would be substantially less utilizing volunteer services and alternative transportation methods such as the marine highway system. He said placement on Zarembo Island was considered due to its low population, assessibility and forage. He felt the potential of "poaching" would be significantly reduced by the location and through a volunteer effort.

ROLAND SHANKS, SPECIAL ASSISTANT, DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME, said there was a meeting on April 16 between the Department and U.S. Forest Service at which time a proposal was presented on a joint study of the feasibility of introducing elk into Southeast Alaska. He said the Regional Forester and Commissioner of Fish and Game committed to undertake the study. Mr. Shanks said before a transplant would be undertaken there were federal requirements which would need to be met. He said in the past the Boards of Game have taken the position to discuss and study transplants before they occur to determine the viability of the incoming population and its effect on indigenous species in the area. Mr. Shanks said they hope the study would enable the development of this information and discussed specifics of the study. He said they hoped the study would be accomplished in one to two years. He said it would be accomplished without a line item in the budget and would attempt to obtain the information in context with other types of studies to be done in Southeast. Mr. Shanks discussed the basis of their budget summary stating should volunteer efforts be utilized it would be substantially reduced.

Chairman Adams stated that transplants had occurred in the past and suggested that the Department utilize the studies previously conducted.

When asked the effects of logging on Zarembo Island in relationship to a transplant, Representative Taylor said logging on the Island had primarily been accomplished, similar to the situation of Afognak Island.

Representative Ringstad MOVED AND ASKED UNANIMOUS CONSENT to report out of committee HB 165. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered and HB 165 was reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation.

Representative Ringstad MOVED AND ASKED UNANIMOUS CONSENT to report out of committee HB 166. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered and HB 166 was reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation.

HB 185

HB 185 - An Act relating to student loans; and providing for an effective date.

Representative Duncan, subcommittee chairman, said they had reviewed HB 185 along with HB 161. He said they were going to have a meeting on Friday, April 19, with regard to HB 161 and would recommend that the Loans version of HB 185 be reported out of committee. Representative Duncan MOVED to report out of committee CS HB 185 (Loans). There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered and CS HB 185 (Loans) was reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and zero fiscal note.

HB 236

HB 236 - An Act creating a Quadrennial Olympic reserve account; and providing for an effective date.

The bill had been assigned to a subcommittee consisting of Representatives Ringstad, chair; Larson and Uehling. Subcommittee chairman Ringstad said they made several technical changes to the bill and explained each including the inclusion of a financial audit section, change in in-kind contributions, transfer to Military Affairs, and fiscal note reduction.

(Tape change, side 2)

Representative Larson said he still did not feel that information concerning the amount of funding and use of the funding were defined. He asked if the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs would assume the responsibility without the \$50.0. Representative Ringstad said no positions were included not feeling it necessary as the Department of Administration would input the contributions, the forms were already printed, etcetera. Representative Larson referenced the responsibilities to be addressed by Military and Veterans' Affairs as included in




ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
RESEARCH AGENCY

Pouch Y, State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811
(907) 465-3991

December 12, 1984

MEMORANDUM

TO: Representative-Elect Robin Taylor

FROM: Sharman Haley 
Legislative Analyst

RE: Transplanting Elk to Southeast Alaska
Research Request 85-053

You requested information to help formulate legislation requiring the Department of Fish and Game to cooperate with sportsmen in a program to transfer elk from Afognak Island to Southeast Alaska. This memorandum provides some background on the issue, outlines the political and legal hurdles for undertaking a transplant, discusses some of the alternative methods for rounding up and transporting the elk, and draws some conclusions regarding legislation.

Background

The history of elk transplant to Southeast Alaska was summarized by the Director of Game in a letter to the Alaska Sportsmen's Council, Inc.:

As you are doubtlessly aware, there has been considerable public interest in an elk transplant to southeast Alaska since at least Statehood. During the early 1960s, two elk transplants were attempted but failed (to Revilla and Gravina Islands). Another transplant was planned in early 1972, but the department's request for Federal Aid funding was denied by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on grounds that such a transplant was not biologically sound... The Service's denial of this request was primarily based on documented competition between deer and elk in several western states with the ultimate result being depressed deer populations. This was particularly evident in areas of harsh winter weather.

This federal action combined with an increasing biological awareness of resident species and habitat conditions in Alaska led the department to review proposed transplants much more critically during the 1970s and to establish firm policies governing transplants statewide. The Alaska Legislature, which had previously

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December 12, 1984
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endorsed long-standing but biologically unsound transplant statutes, took a firm stance on such matters in 1970 and repealed Sections 16.25.020, 16.25.030, and 16.25.040 of Title 16, Alaska Statutes.¹

Last August, the Governor and the Commissioner of Fish and Game met with Representative Ron Wendte, Bob DeWitt, and other sportsmen's representatives on the issue of elk transplant to Southeast. Their conclusion was that if the sportsmen could get the support of the fish and game advisory committees, the Fish and Game Regional Council, and the State Boards of Fish and Game, the department would proceed with the transplant. When the issue came before the State Board of Game December 8, 1984, the board recommended that it be taken to the advisory committees.

Legal and Political Hurdles

Wild game may not be possessed or transported in the state without a permit from the Department of Fish and Game.² There are no specific statutory or regulatory guidelines for the department to follow in considering a permit request. The position of the department outlined in its letter to the Alaska Sportsmen's Council is as follows:

4. As a matter of policy, we will not approve of, nor participate in, transplants of nonindigenous wildlife without detailed feasibility studies and ecological investigations.
5. We are not currently funded, nor are we likely to be in the future, for elk transplant feasibility studies.
6. We would be willing to conduct or participate in elk transplant feasibility studies involving ecological investigations only if: (a) outside funding were made available; and (b) the Division of Game received additional positions for research biologists such that our existing research and management programs on resident species were not affected.
7. Until such time that detailed feasibility studies may be completed and the results closely analyzed, resource agencies in

¹Letter from W. Lewis Pamplin Jr. to Ronald J. Somerville, November 3, 1983.

²AS 16.05.255; 5AAC 81.040; 5AAC 81.130.

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Alaska should maintain consistent opposition to transplanting nonindigenous wildlife species.³

The approval of federal agencies is also required to transplant game. The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), requires an environmental analysis prior to federal action. This analysis could take the simpler form of an Environmental Assessment, or NEPA might be interpreted to require a more detailed Environmental Impact Statement.

If federal aid funds are to be used, which would normally be the case for a wildlife transplant program, approval of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required. In 1972, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service evaluated and rejected the State's proposal to transplant elk to Kruzof Island. The evidence suggested that the deer population would decline as a result of the elk's competition for forage, and that the proposal was therefore "biologically unsound."

With or without federal aid funds, approval by the U.S. Forest Service is required. The Forest Service is the federal manager of most of the land and habitat in Southeast. For fish and game management, the Forest Service has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. One of the provisions of this agreement is that the department will not sanction the introduction of any species onto National Forest land without Forest Service agreement. Further, the department is obligated to conduct the necessary research for the Forest Service's environmental analysis of the proposal. My conversation with Phil Janik, Director of Wildlife and Fisheries for the Forest Service, indicated that the Forest Service review would likely be technical, not political; if the feasibility study and environmental assessment showed the proposal to be technically sound and indicated that the only significant biological impact would be a trade off of deer for elk, the Forest Service would not necessarily reject the proposal on that basis. The decision to proceed with the transfer would likely be left to the State's political process.

One way the State makes political decisions regarding game is the process agreed to in August by the governor and sportsmen's representatives and recently affirmed by the State Board of Game: the proposal should first be considered by each of the 18 Southeast fish and game advisory committees and the Southeast Regional Council before reviewed by the State Board. The State Board will consider the recommendations of the local and regional entities and make a final decision for the State. This process would allow residents in all areas that might ultimately be affected by the decision to be heard on the issue.

³W. Lewis Pamplin Jr., op cit.

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Legislation is another means of making a political decision on the elk transplant issue. A bill could be introduced directing Fish and Game to conduct the necessary studies, and subject to federal approval, transplant elk to Southeast Alaska. An appropriation would also be needed. If the legislation were passed and signed into law, action by the State Board of Game would not be required.

Operations

Once the decision is made to proceed, there are at least two methods of rounding up and transporting the elk. The most appropriate method for elk from Afognak Island would be to tranquilize the elk individually with darts and pick them up with a helicopter. The elk would then be flown to Kodiak and on to Southeast. This operation would likely require six to eight experienced people. An alternative method would be to import surplus elk from Washington or Oregon where the elk can be driven into existing corrals and loaded into trucks. Although a veterinary inspection would be required for every elk to be transported across state lines, this still might prove to be less expensive than a roundup on Afognak.

Conclusions

The first thing the Department of Fish and Game needs to participate in the proposed elk transplant to Southeast is a political mandate to do so. This could be accomplished through legislation. To facilitate the required federal cooperation, you may wish to specify in the legislation that no federal aid funds are to be used. This way only the approval of the Forest Service, and not of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Protection, would be required. You might also consider having the legislation drafted generally enough to allow the department to pursue the least expensive roundup and transportation option, and to direct them to utilize available volunteer services.

The second thing the department needs to proceed is money. If you introduce legislation, the department will be required to prepare a fiscal note estimating the costs to carry out your proposal. You and your staff (or you may request assistance from this agency) should review the fiscal note very carefully to determine whether you agree with the department's estimates. In particular, you may wish to ascertain whether the department has considered the volunteer services of interested sportsmen. You can expect that the department will request funding for additional research biologists to carry out the necessary studies. You may wish to review the department's existing research commitments to determine whether you agree that additional positions are needed, or whether you feel that existing staff should alter their

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research priorities to perform the necessary elk research. If you disagree with the department's fiscal note, you may want to prepare your own version for committee consideration.

* * * * *

I hope that this memorandum has provided you with useful information. More detailed information on specific requirements in terms of personnel, equipment, time, etc. will be forthcoming in a departmental fiscal note after legislation is introduced. If you have any further questions for this agency, please don't hesitate to call.

SH

HCB
165
70347

ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS 4/22/85

Elk overpopulate Colorado national park

The Associated Press

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, Colo. — Hundreds of elk in Rocky Mountain National Park may have to be shot because the herd is so big it is damaging the park, according to federal and state wildlife officials.

They estimate the park's elk population has increased by nearly 50 percent — to nearly 2,000 — since 1980. Counting the elk in and around the park, the herd has grown to 4,000 since 1982, partly because predators such as the grizzly bear and wolf no longer roam the park.

"It's almost a foregone conclusion that reductions in the herd will have to be made" soon, said Dave Stevens, a biologist at the park. The herd must be reduced by 400 to 500 elk each year for a few

But hunting may be curtailed in Wyoming

The Associated Press

JACKSON, Wyo. — Wyoming Game and Fish Department managers are recommending tighter restrictions on elk hunting north of Jackson Hole this year because the elk population is below the objective.

Department officials will recommend fewer licenses be issued when they go before the state Game and Fish Commission this month. The commission meets April 25 in Cheyenne to decide on the annual big game seasons.

The elk population north of Jackson currently is estimated at 9,300, while the objective is 11,000. The department thus plans to recommend that the number of limited quota elk licenses be reduced from 750 to 400.

Area supervisor Tom Toman said the department also will recommend that the commission issue 1,000 elk licenses for Grand Teton National Park, down from 1,800 last year.

years to stabilize it at between 1,000 and 1,500, he said recently.

The elk herd's exploding numbers coupled with its dwindling habitat are beginning to strain the park, Stevens said, noting that too

many browsing elk are damaging aspen and willow trees.

The elk in the area that would become Rocky Mountain National Park were gone by the turn of the century, so about 1915 about 50 elk were brought in from Yellowstone

in Wyoming. The herd has grown ever since.

The current overpopulation recalls earlier elk shootings by rangers in Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone National parks, that had to be halted because of public outcry.