

C S S B

B 6 O

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(11)

Date referred: 4/5/88

FURTHER REFERRALS:

(Resources waived 4/5)

DATE: 4-28-88

The Finance Committee has considered CSSB 360(Res)

"An Act repealing termination dates related to the Delta Junction Bison Range area."

RECOMMENDS:

- replace with _____ the same title
- attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

- fiscal impact same as previous fiscal note published 2/3/88 Senate
- zero fiscal note same as previous zero fiscal note published _____
- zero with analysis

SIGNING/DO PASS:

ADAMS Al Adams

POURCHOT [Signature]

LARSON Ronald J. Larson

SWACK [Signature]

WOYER Mark Boyer

RIEGER [Signature]

FRANK [Signature]

DAVIS Mike Davis

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

GOLL [Signature]

WALLIS [Signature]

BROWN [Signature]

Al Adams
Chairman's signature

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____ Agency Affected: DNR & Fish & Game
Tide: An Act Repealing the Termination of BRU: Game Division
the Delta Junction Bison Range Area
Sponsor: SB360- Coghill; HB383 - Schultz Components: Game
Requestor: Senate Resources

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	0	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
TRAVEL	0	0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
CONTRACTUAL	0	0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
SUPPLIES	0	0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE	0	0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER Prg. Rcpts	0	0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	1	1				
PART-TIME	2	2				
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Actual annual income from program receipts is variable. Presently the authorized ceiling is \$50,000. Source is an additional \$5 charge per permit application for the Delta bison herd drawing permit hunt. (continued next page)

Prepared by: Don McKnight Phone: 465-4190
Division: Game Date: January 29, 1988

Approved by Commissioner: Don McKnight Date: 1-29-88
Agency: Fish and Game

Distribution (by preparer):

Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)

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LEGISLATIVE FINANCE

ANALYSIS: (continued)

Development costs of the Delta Junction Bison Range through FY89 are paid from a CIP established in 1984 (Chapter 39 SLA 1984). If SB360 or HB383 pass, the Bison Range will continue, and program receipts from the permit application fee will continue to pay for maintenance level operations. General funds would not be involved. The principal costs would be fertilizer for bison food production (perennial grasses and some barley), field personnel, fuel for equipment, and potentially some contracting for specialized work for which department staff is untrained. Line item expenditures are estimates which may change.

Original sponsor: Coghill

1 IN THE SENATE BY THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
2 CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 360 (Resources)
3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
4 FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION
5 A BILL
6 For an Act entitled: "An Act repealing termination dates related to the
7 Delta Junction Bison Range area."
8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:
9 * Section 1. Section 3, ch. 39, SLA 1979, as amended by sec. 1, ch. 73,
10 SLA 1980 is repealed.
11 * Sec. 2. Sections 2, 4, and 6, ch. 118, SLA 1984 are repealed.



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
BILL ANALYSIS

DEPARTMENT Fish and Game	DIVISION Game	BILL NUMBER HB383; SB360	SPONSOR Senator Coghill and Representative Schultz
SHORT TITLE OF BILL An act repealing the termination date of the Delta Junction Bison Range area			
DEPARTMENT POSITION Favor/support			
PREPARED BY Dick Bishop	DATE 1/28/88	COMMISSIONER'S SIGNATURE <i>W. M. Kelly</i>	DATE 1-29-88

SUMMARY

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED BY BILL Department of Natural Resources	CONSTITUENT GROUP(S) AFFECTED BY BILL See Section 1 on Page 2
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BILL See Section 2 on Page 2	ORGANIZATIONAL OPPOSITION TO BILL None to date

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE FISCAL NOTE ATTACHED

BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE INTENT Legislative intent in establishing and funding development of the Bison Range was to provide additional winter range for the Delta bison herd, and to alleviate damage by bison to crops on the Delta Agricultural Project. The Delta Junction Bison Range was established in 1979 with a 3 year sunset provision (Chap 39 SLA 1979). In 1980 the sunset provision was extended to 10 years (August 1989) to provide time to develop the range and test its effectiveness (Chap 73 SLA 1980). In 1984, a 1.5 million dollar CIP was approved to fund range development (Chap 39 SLA 1984). In 1984, the (continued next page)

ANALYSIS OF BILL/PROGRAM EFFECTS

The two bills, HB383 and SB360, are identical. Their effect would be to eliminate the statutory mandate that the Bison Range, the related hunting permit fee increase, and the timber management provisions cease to exist at "sunset," August 1, 1989. Elimination of the sunset provision would enable the ADF&G to continue to maintain the Bison Range for its original purpose, which it is successfully fulfilling.

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LEGISLATIVE FINANCE

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED

Line 10 in both bills, "Section 4" should read "Section 6." Section 6 addresses both Section 2 (dealing with \$10 permit fee) and Section 4 (timber management provisions).

PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR ANALYSIS.

Bill Analysis

Page 2

BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE INTENT (continued)

the drawing permit fee for the Delta bison hunt was raised to \$10 to provide range maintenance and management funds (\$5/permit).

Section 1:

CONSTITUENT GROUPS AFFECTED BY BILL (continued)

Salcha-Big Delta Soil Conservation District
Delta Bison Range Ad Hoc Committee
Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee
Delta Junction Chamber of Commerce
Alaska Farmers and Stock Growers Association
Delta Junction Area Residents
Deltana Corporation
Bison Range Neighbors (Alaska Highway Residents)

Section 2:

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BILL (continued)

Salcha-Big Delta Soil Conservation District
Delta Bison Range Ad Hoc Committee
Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee (no quorum)
Delta Junction Chamber of Commerce
Delta Trappers Association
Delta Sportsmen's Association
Alaska Farmers and Stock Growers Association (only for 5-year extension)
Deltana Corporation (only for 5-year extension)
Bison Range Neighbors (Alaska Highway Residents)



THE DELTA JUNCTION BISON RANGE

History of Bison in Alaska

Historically, Alaska has been very important to bison in North America. Bison colonized North America after migrating from Asia to Alaska over the Bering land bridge. Bison were once the most abundant large mammal in Alaska, but became extinct about 500 years ago due to changing climatic conditions. Before their extinction, bison inhabited the Delta River near Delta Junction.

Facts About the Delta Bison Herd

In 1928, 23 bison were transplanted from the National Bison Range in Montana to their former range along the Delta River. By 1947 the herd had increased to 400 animals. Hunting began in 1951 and is currently used to limit the herd to a precalving population of 275-300 bison. The herd is maintained at this size to reduce potential for damage to agricultural crops and to keep the herd within the carrying capacity of its summer range. About 6,000-11,000 people apply annually for an average of 40 permits to hunt Delta bison. Delta bison have been used to start three other herds in the State.

The Delta herd's summer range is along the Delta River southwest of Delta Junction. In the fall, bison migrate from the Delta River toward Delta Junction. Prior to agricultural development, the winter range included country east of Delta Junction between the Granite Mountains and Tanana Hills. With development of agriculture, bison began using farms extensively during the fall and winter.

Bison and Agriculture in the Delta Junction Area

Delta bison began to use hay and cereal grains for part of their fall and winter feed when farms were developed in the herd's traditional winter range. Most damage occurred when bison used crops prior to fall harvest. Problems began in the 1950's, continued through the 1970's, and escalated with development of the Delta Agricultural Project in 1979.

History of the Delta Junction Bison Range

In 1979, the Alaska Legislature established the 90,000-acre Delta Junction Bison Range. The purpose of the Bison Range was to perpetuate free-ranging bison by providing adequate winter range, and to alter seasonal movements of bison to reduce damage to agriculture. However, no money was appropriated for Bison Range development, and only small scale habitat development was initially possible. As the Delta Agricultural Project was developed in the early 1980's, conflicts between bison and agriculture increased. Because both bison and agriculture are important to Delta Junction, the community became concerned about the growing problem. They urgently requested a special appropriation from the Alaska Legislature to fund Bison Range habitat development. In 1984, the Legislature appropriated \$1.54 million for Bison Range development, and increased the bison hunt application fee from \$5 to \$10. Funds from the fee increase were for management of the Bison Range.

Results of Bison Range Development

Habitat development produced 2800 acres of bison forage on the Bison Range, and significantly reduced problems between bison and agriculture in the Delta Junction area. During the fall migration, bison now leave the Delta River and migrate directly to the Bison Range instead of migrating to the Delta Agricultural Project as in the early 1980's. Bison damage to farms was significantly reduced in 1985 with the first substantial habitat development on the Bison Range. Continued development in 1986 and 1987 resulted in no fall crop damage those years. The appropriation has also been used to purchase farm equipment for forage production, develop bison watering sites, construct an equipment storage building, provide Bison Range staff, and other projects.

Other Uses of the Bison Range

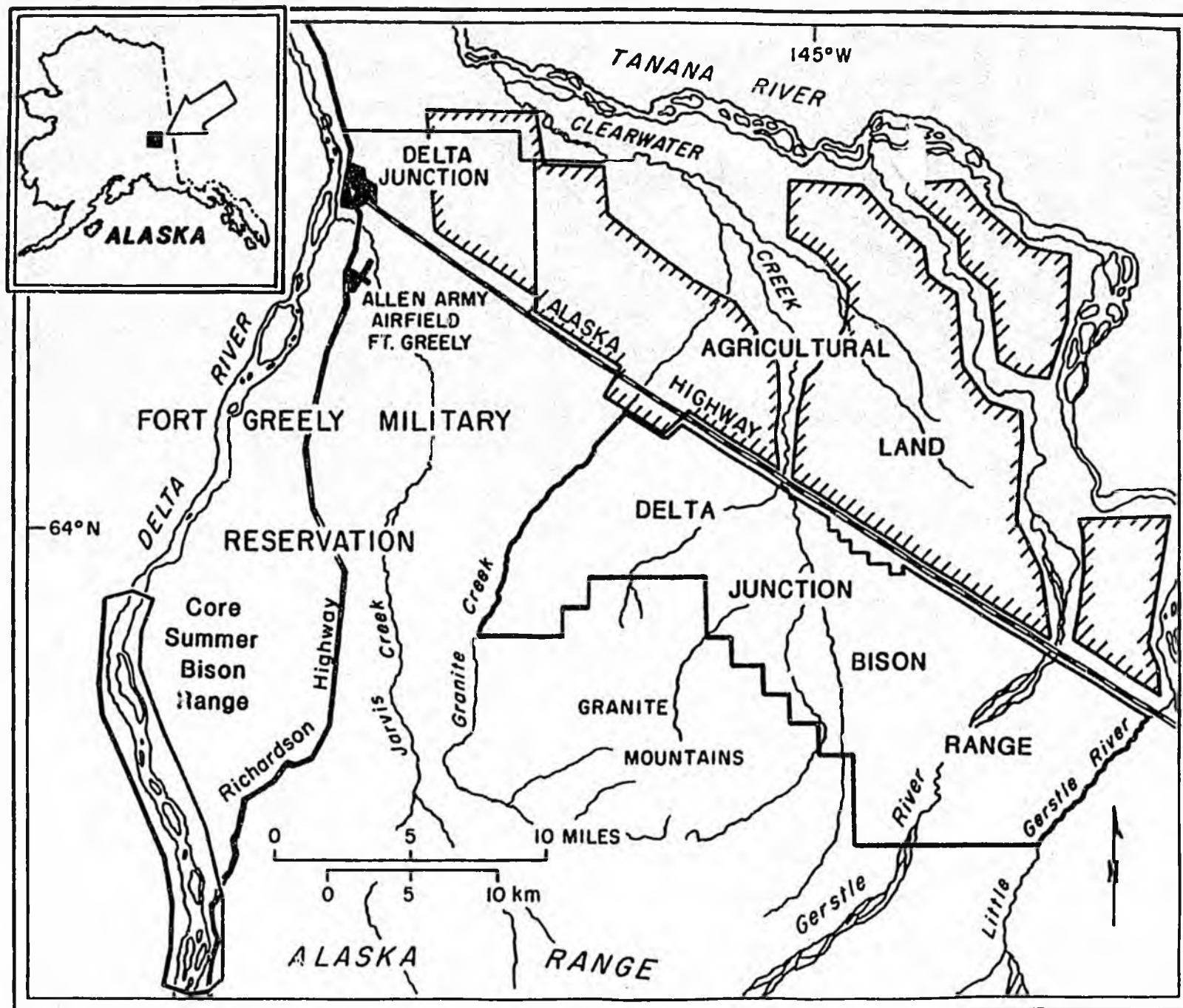
The Bison Range is managed for a wide variety of public uses. Public groups are encouraged to use the Bison Range if the use is compatible with bison management. For example, the 1987 Alaska State Blackpowder Rendezvous was held on the Bison Range during 3 days in July. The Bison Range is also used for timber sales, hunting, cross-country skiing, agricultural research, dog sledding, trapping, wildlife viewing, fishing, and other activities.

Economic Impact of the Bison Range to Delta Junction

The Delta bison herd and Bison Range make an important contribution to the economy of Delta Junction. About 40 hunting parties travel to Delta Junction each year to hunt bison. Each group spends about \$290 in Delta Junction on lodging, gasoline, meals, and groceries. In addition, the Bison Range appropriation has been used to pay nearly \$1 million to local businesses for habitat development. Salary paid to Bison Range staff has also contributed to the Delta Junction economy.

Future of the Bison Range

The Bison Range has benefited the Delta bison herd, farmers, and the community of Delta Junction. If the Bison Range and \$10 application fee are retained, it will become increasingly effective in providing fall and winter bison forage, contributing to the economy of Delta Junction, and providing public recreation for the people of Delta Junction and Alaska.



FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE DELTA JUNCTION BISON RANGE

Chronology of Bison Range Legislation

1979--Creation of Delta Junction Legislation (Ch. 39, SLA 1979)

1980--Original 3 year sunset clause changed to 10 years effective August 1979 (Ch. 73, SLA 1980)

1984--Special appropriation of \$1.544 million (Ch. 59, SLA 1984)

Bison hunt permit application fee increased to \$10 (Ch. 118, SLA 1984)

Bison Range Habitat Development Since 1979

Acres cleared = 2800

Acres planted = 2100 (700 acres are covered by berm piles)

Forage planted = nugget bluegrass, arctared fescue, barley

Water site = drilled well to provide water to stock tanks

Equipment Purchased With Special Appropriation

120 horse power tractor

field disk

rotary brush cutter

4 ton capacity fertilizer spreader

dozer

used 2 ton flat bed truck and tilt bed trailer

used 40 ft. X 60 ft. metal storage building



Salcha-Big Delta Soil and Water Conservation District
P.O. Box 547 - Delta Junction, Alaska 99737 - (907) 895-4241

March 3, 1988

Honorable Richard Shultz
Alaska State Legislature
P. O. Box V (MS 3100)
Juneau, Alaska 99811

RE: HB 383 - Bison Range Termination

Dear Dick:

The impending termination of the Delta Bison Range should not occur, nor should the hunt permit fee be lowered.

The Delta Bison Range has reached a stage of development where it can and does function as intended. The termination of the range would restore the prior conflict between bison and farmers, and a need for another solution. That is neither necessary nor desirable.

Please move HB 383 along to a final affirmative vote.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

CHARLES G. FORCK
Secretary-Treasurer

CGF/pd

1 IN THE SENATE

BY COGHILL

2

SENATE BILL NO. 360

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

A BILL

6

For an Act entitled: "An Act repealing the termination date of the Delta

7

Junction Bison Range area."

8

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

9

* Section 1. Section 3, ch. 39, SLA 1979, as amended by sec. 1, ch. 73,

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SLA 1980, and sec. 4, ch. 118, SLA 1984 are repealed.