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SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

FURTHER

2/16/89

DATE TURNED INTO OFFICE 3/20/89

Mr. President:

Finance

Committee considered

SB 33

establishing the Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area; efd

and recommended

- replace with _____ CS _____) same title
- or adopt _____ CS _____) new title
- attached amendment(s) and technical title change (HB only)
- _____ letter of intent adopted

do pass

do not pass

no recommendation

individual recommendations

further referral to _____

FISCAL NOTE(S) 2 zero fiscal impact appropriation no FN
 new SEC-A11 updated previous 2/10/89 DMC
 same as previous fiscal note(s) published 2/10/89 DF+B

MEMBERS SIGNING DO PASS

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

[Handwritten signatures]

DO PASS
Rich. Kelly - (Co-CHAIR)
 Chairman signature and recommendation

Committee Backup attached

John B. ... (Co-CHAIR)
DO PASS

STATE OF ALASKA
1989 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL VERSION: SB 33
PUBLISH DATE: _____

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST: _____

REVISION DATE: _____ AGENCY: All Departments
 TITLE: Willow Mountain Critical BRU: _____
Habitat Area
 SPONSOR: Sen. Kerttula COMPONENTS: _____
 REQUESTOR: Senate Finance

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERS. SERVICES	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTUAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAND/BUILD.	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS/CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

GENERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS:

PREPARED BY:


 SENATOR RICK UEHLING, CO-CHAIRMAN
 SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

DATE: March 20, 1989
 PHONE NO.: 465-4821

STATE OF ALASKA
1989 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL VERSION: SB 33
 PUBLISH DATE: 2/16/89

A/B

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: 25-Jan-89 Agency Affected: Natural Resources
 Title: Willow Mountain Critical BRU: Land and Water Management
 Habitat Area: _____
 Sponsor: Kertulla Components: Land & Water
 Requestor: Senate Resources

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND&STRUCTURES						
GRANTS,CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0.0					

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

received
 1-27-89

Prepared by: Larry Ostrovsky Phone: 465-2400
 Division: Commissioners Office Date: 25-Jan-89

Approved by Commissioner: Lennie Gorsuch Date: 25-Jan-89
 Agency: Department of Natural Resources

- Distribution (by preparer) :
- Legislative Finance
 - Legislative Sponsor
 - Requestor
 - Office of Management and Budget
 - Impacted Agency(ies)

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____ Agency Affected: Dept. of Fish and Game
 Title: An Act establishing the Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area BRU: Habitat
 Sponsor: Kerttula Components: _____
 Requestor: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERSONAL SERVICES	0					
TRAVEL	0					
CONTRACTUAL	0					
SUPPLIES	0					
EQUIPMENT	0					
LAND & STRUCTURES	0					
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0					
MISCELLANEOUS	0					
TOTAL OPERATING	0					

CAPITAL	0					
---------	---	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE	0					
---------	---	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0					
FEDERAL FUNDS	0					
OTHER	0					
TOTAL	0					

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0					
PART-TIME	0					
TEMPORARY	0					

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by Frank H. Kerttula Frank Rue, Director Phone: 465-4105
 Division: Habitat Date: 1/24/89
 Approved by Commissioner Orin C. Jensen Date: 2.2.89
 Agency: Department of Fish and Game

Distribution (by preparer) :
 Legislative Finance
 Legislative Sponsor
 Requestor
 Office of Management and Budget
 Impacted Agency(ies)



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
BILL ANALYSIS

DEPARTMENT Fish and Game	DIVISION Habitat	BILL NUMBER SB33	SPONSOR Senator Kerttula
SHORT TITLE OF BILL Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area			
DEPARTMENT POSITION Support			
PREPARED BY Frank Rue, Habitat Div.	DATE 1/23/89	COMMISSIONER'S SIGNATURE <i>W. C. Cullenworth</i>	DATE 2-2-89

SUMMARY

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED BY BILL Department of Natural Resources	CONSTITUENT GROUP(S) AFFECTED BY BILL Hunting, fishing, trapping, recreational interests, Palmer/Wasilla area residents
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BILL Matanuska-Susitna Borough (see attached letter) Department of Natural Resources Environmental Organizations	ORGANIZATIONAL OPPOSITION TO BILL None known
FISCAL IMPACT: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NONE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FISCAL NOTE ATTACHED	

BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE INTENT

The purpose of establishing Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area is to protect and preserve the habitat that is most crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife populations, especially moose.

ANALYSIS OF BILL/PROGRAM EFFECTS

The bill establishes Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area. It provides for the management of the area under the State Critical Habitat Area program. It establishes the purpose for which the area is to be managed and ensures protection of essential moose habitat.

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED

PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR ANALYSIS.

1 IN THE SENATE

BY KERTTULA

2

SENATE BILL NO. 33

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act establishing the Willow Mountain Critical

7

Habitat Area; and providing for an effective date."

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

9 * Section 1. PURPOSE. The Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area is
10 established to

11 (1) protect the area's exceptional fish and wildlife habitats
12 and populations;

13 (2) ensure that the area will be managed primarily to maintain
14 the productivity of the habitat for moose and will provide opportunities
15 for hunting, trapping, and other dispersed recreational activities.

16 * Sec. 2. AS 16.20 is amended by adding a new section to read:

17 Sec. 16.20.620. WILLOW MOUNTAIN CRITICAL HABITAT AREA ESTAB-
18 LISHED. (a) The following described area is established as the
19 Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area:

20 (1) Township 20 North, Range 2 West, Seward Meridian

21 Section 7

22 Sections 18 - 19

23 (2) Township 20 North, Range 3 West, Seward Meridian

24 Sections 1 - 2

25 Sections 11 - 14

26 Sections 23 - 24

27 (3) Township 21 North, Range 2 West, Seward Meridian

28 Sections 4 - 7

29 Section 18: W1/2

- 1 (4) Township 21 North, Range 3 West, Seward Meridian
2 Section 1
3 Sections 11 - 14
4 Sections 23 - 26
5 Sections 35 - 36
6 (5) Township 22 North, Range 2 West, Seward Meridian
7 Sections 19 - 21
8 Sections 28 - 33.

9 (b) Notwithstanding AS 16.20.510 - 16.20.530, the commissioner
10 of fish and game, in consultation with the commissioner of natural
11 resources, shall prepare a management plan for the Willow Mountain
12 Critical Habitat Area. The commissioner of fish and game and the
13 commissioner of natural resources shall exercise their respective
14 authorities over the area in a manner consistent with the management
15 plan.

16 * Sec. 3. Until a management plan is developed under AS 16.20.620(b),
17 enacted by sec. 2 of this Act, management decisions for the Willow Mountain
18 Critical Habitat Area must reflect the intent of the Willow Mountain Sub-
19 unit of the Hatcher Pass Management Plan adopted in October, 1986.

20 * Sec. 4. This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).



Alaska State Legislature

SENATE

Official Business

P.O. Box V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

TO: Senator Rick Uehling, Co-Chairman
Senate Finance

FROM: Senator Jay Kerttula *Jay*

DATE: February 23, 1989

SUBJECT: SB 33; an act establishing the Willow Mountain
Critical Habitat Area

Would you please review SB 33 and consider scheduling it as soon as possible? There is no known group opposition and is has zero fiscal notes.

Briefly, SB 33 sets aside about 22,000 acres of prime moose habitat 10 miles northeast of Willow. The Willow Mountain area is known for its unusually large numbers of moose concentrated in a relatively small area (as many as 750 animals within 140 square miles). The critical habitat protection designation is being proposed because of concerns that recent and future development in the Hatcher Pass area will have a long term negative impact on moose populations in the Upper Susitna Valley.

Please contact Jenny Logsdon of my staff if you have questions or if additional information is needed.

Attachments

JCS

Proposed Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area
Background Information

Location: The proposed Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area is located on the western slopes of Willow Mountain between Willow Creek and the Kashwitna River in Southcentral Alaska approximately 10 miles northwest of Hatcher Pass and 10 miles northeast of Willow.

Area Description: Located along the western slopes of Willow Mountain, the area ranges in elevation from 1000 to 2600 feet. The area is vegetated with mixed stands of birch, white spruce, cottonwood, and aspen which grade into willow and alder at higher elevations. Extensive grasslands cover the ridge-tops and intermix with the willow/alder stands. Wetland communities of black spruce are scattered throughout. The unusually extensive stands of willow provide vegetative cover and browse attractive to moose.

Justification: Willow Mountain supports unusually large concentrations of moose in late fall and early winter. The area contains some of the highest quality moose habitat in the lower Susitna River Valley. High quality browse, shallow snow cover, and other habitat characteristics provide moose with essential habitat. The seasonal density of moose in this area is one of the highest in the state. At present moose populations in the area are estimated to number well over 1000 animals and with maintenance of habitat and enhancement of adjacent areas, could further increase. Large numbers of moose are also known to utilize the mountain slopes during summer and early fall. Maintaining habitat on Willow Mountain, including the proposed critical habitat area, is key to sustaining the integrity of the area's moose populations.

Land Status: The proposed critical habitat area encompasses 22,720 acres and is composed entirely of state and state selected land. There are 5,120 acres of state selected land in the northern end of the proposed critical habitat area. There is no mental health land within the boundaries of this area.

Current Uses: The area is used year-round for a variety of wildlife oriented activities. Moose hunting is the primary activity with moose hunters coming primarily from the Anchorage or Palmer/Wasilla and Willow areas. Willow Mountain receives intensive moose hunting effort by ORV. Trapping is also an important use of the area.

Important furbearers include mink, weasel, beaver, coyote, lynx, and otter. All three species of ptarmigan are hunted in the winter. It is also a popular snowmachining area due to the extensive stretches of wide open terrain. Dog mushing and cross country skiing also occur in the area.

Public Access: Presently, public access into the Willow Mountain area is gained via the "Peters-Purchases Creek" trail. It is used primarily by moose hunters in the fall and ptarmigan hunters, recreational snow machiners and fur trappers during the winter. The trail begins near MP 14 of the Hatcher Pass Road at the north end of the bridge over Willow Creek and terminates near timberline on the south side of Willow Mountain. The trail traverses numerous swampy areas, requiring either track vehicles or ATV's with low pressure tires. A new bridge and road is planned for construction (spring 1987) across Willow Creek at approximately MP 5 of the Hatcher Pass Road and will create additional access to Willow Mountain in the future.

Other Natural Resources: The Willow Mountain plateau has low mineral potential. Portions of four placer mining claims are located in the southeastern corner of the area, (T20N, R2W, Section 19, Seward Meridian) near Peters Creek.

Currently no grazing occurs in the area. Potential grazing lands within the area have been identified, however, a majority of the potential rangeland is interspersed with an abundance of standing water and boggy areas which limits its use for grazing purposes. Provisions of the Hatcher Pass Management Plan reserve development of the grazing potential within the Willow Mountain Unit until existing grazing resources are utilized within the eastern portion of Hatcher Pass.

The Hatcher Pass Management Plan identifies a dense stand of white spruce on the western slopes of Willow Mountain below 1000 feet as the only significant forestry potential in the vicinity.

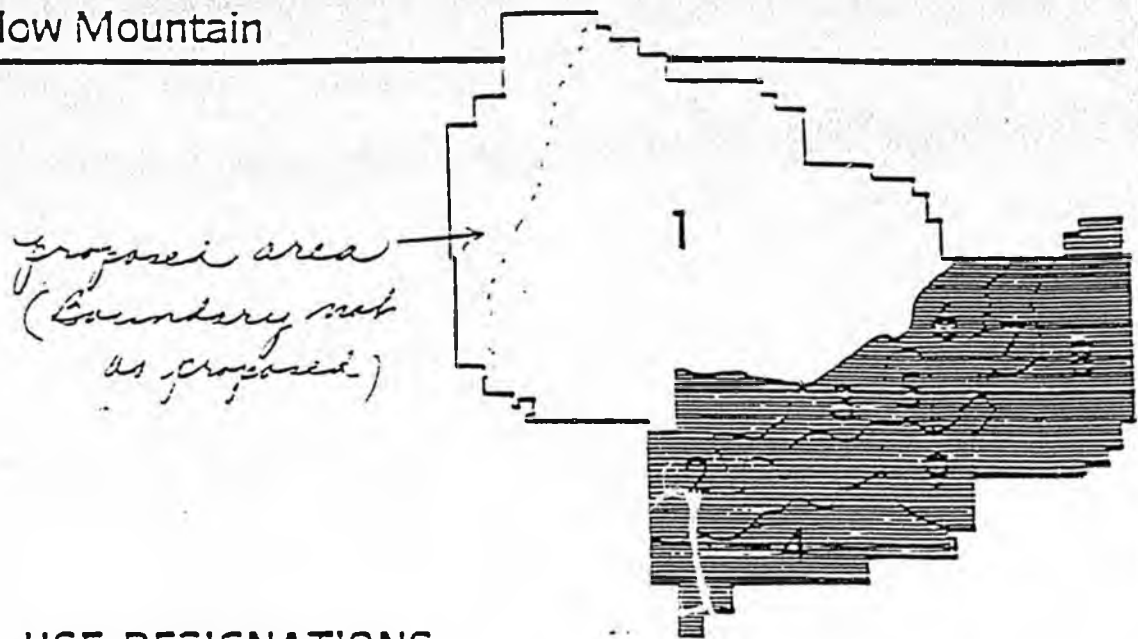
Area's History: Because the area has had limited public access to date, and few attractions other than moose, it has received relatively little impact from human use. High densities of moose have been the primary inhabitants of the area, which in turn attracted hunters beginning in the early 1950's. Hunters, trappers, and more recently, recreational snow machiners, have been the primary users of the Willow Mountain area.

Threats: Recent plans to bridge Willow Creek and extend a road into the Kashwitna management unit (adjacent to the proposed critical habitat area) for the purpose of a timber sale will alter the undisturbed nature of Willow Mountain's critical moose habitat. Development of road access into this area threatens its integrity with new land use activities. Improved road access may mean an increase in snowmachine use within the area which could result in significant disturbance and additional stress to moose populations during already stressful seasons. Increases in motorized vehicle use impact habitats, wildlife distribution, and the quality of the outdoor experience, particularly hunting. Although settlement is not allowed in this area in the Hatcher Pass Management Plan, the potential for settlement activity in the area is raised by development of road access.

Support and Opposition: The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly has sent a letter (dated February 5, 1987) to legislators requesting the establishment of the Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area. The October 1986 Hatcher Pass Management Plan documents several groups in support of critical habitat area designation: the Wildlife Federation of Alaska; the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society; the Alaska Center for the Environment; and several individual citizens. The Alaska Frontier Trappers Association is also on record as supporting protection of the critical habitat in this area. In the October 1986 Hatcher Pass Management Plan the Department of Natural Resources endorsed legislative designation of the area for the purpose of protecting moose habitat.

There is no known group opposition to this proposal.

I. Willow Mountain



A. LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

- Primary Uses: Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Recreation
- Secondary Uses: Grazing (see Map 11 for location)
- Prohibited Uses: Settlement, Remote Cabin Permits, Commercial Recreation Development, Grazing outside designated areas (see Map 3, pages 115/117)
- Mining: Open

B. BACKGROUND

The rugged peaks of the Talkeetna Mountains end in a gently sloped plateau known as Willow Mountain in this subunit. Peters, Purches and Little Willow Creeks flow out of steep-walled mountain valleys to the north and south of the Willow Mountain plateau. The lowlands portions of the subunit contain many swampy areas that make access difficult.

Willow Mountain is an important moose habitat area. Year-round populations between 1,500 and 2,000 moose occur in western portions of this unit and are among the highest in the Susitna Basin. Willow Mountain provides winter and summer moose habitat that supports breeding and calving activities. This is an important moose hunting area due to its relative accessibility to urban areas and an abundance of moose. The alpine zone (above 2,800 feet in elevation) is good bear, sheep, and caribou habitat, and brown and black bear are often seen in these areas. Furbearing animals are also common and trapping is an important use of the area. Black bear and ptarmigan hunting are popular as well.

WILLOW MOUNTAIN

Extensive placer claims occur along Peters and Purnas Creeks; mineral potential in the eastern mountainous portion is high. However, the Willow Mountain plateau has low mineral potential.

The Willow Mountain subunit contains a significant portion of the potential range resources within the management unit. However, many portions of the Willow Mountain plateau where most of the grazing resources occur in the subunit has boggy and standing water areas, and access is difficult.

Currently, there are no roads to this subunit. Motorized access is by aircraft, snowmachine or all terrain vehicle. This is a peculiar snowmachining area due to extensive, wide-open terrain. A cabin built by the Mac-Su Motor Musners and used by the public is located on the southeast corner of the Willow Mountain plateau. Dog mushing also occurs in some areas. Views of the Susitna Valley and Alaska Range from Willow Mountain are spectacular. Wilderness foot travel occurs in the steep eastern portions. Bogs, brush, wetlands and creeks limit summer and fall access in the lowlands portions of this subunit. Extensive CRV trails occur in the wetlands in the southwest corner of the subunit. The Peters-Purnas trail which goes over Lucky Shot Ridge receives its heaviest use during moose hunting season. However, erosion and trail widening is occurring in the steep portions and in bogs along the existing trail alignment.

There is high forestry potential on the western edge below 1000 feet where a dense white spruce forest occurs. Access for forestry to the proposed Kaswitna State Forest area west of Willow Mountain is planned in the near future.

C. MANAGEMENT INTENT

The Willow Mountain subunit will be managed primarily to maintain its exceptional wildlife productivity and to continue to provide opportunities for hunting, trapping and other dispersed recreational activities to meet existing and future demand. The entire subunit is open to mineral entry.

The management intent includes reserving the portion to utilize existing grass forage resources for future grazing; however, the priority is to utilize the grasslands in the Hillside and Little Susitna subunits prior to those in the Willow Mountain subunit. In the interim, research should be conducted to determine whether grazing can take place without major adverse impact to wildlife habitat.

Forestry is an allowed use in the western perimeter of the subunit. The intent is that any forestry operations will be limited to disease control or habitat enhancement as defined by ADF&G and compatible with scenic views from the ridge above.

Motorized access is an important use for hunting, trapping, and general recreation. The intent is for these uses to continue. The management intent is to limit summer/fall use to designated trails to minimize erosion and trailmaking. An exception will be to allow retrieval of

downed big game animals. This policy will be put into effect after working with users to clearly map and sign designated trails. No highway vehicles will be allowed in the Willow Mountain Subunit (unless authorized as part of a mineral development). New trails may be established within the subunit and designated for a specific use, such as for dog mushing, ATV and snowmachine use.

D. PLANNED ACTIONS

1. HABITAT DESIGNATION

The moose concentration area on the west slope of Willow Mountain is proposed for legislative designation to ensure long term retention in public ownership and management for its wildlife values (see Map 11). ADF&G originally proposed that the plan recommend that the entire subunit be legislatively designated as a Critical Habitat Area and a portion closed to mineral entry. However, the planning team was unable to agree on this. See Appendix X for further explanation.

2. TRAIL REPAIR

Where erosion and extensive trail making in boggy areas is occurring, DNR and ADF&G should work with users to reduce trail damage, establish trail erosion prevention measures and do minimal trail improvements to maintain motorized access opportunities.

3. SNOWMACHINE USE AND MOOSE

If there is documentation that snow machine use is adversely affecting overwintering moose in certain areas, seasonal closures in these key areas may be established.

4. MOTORIZED USE MANAGEMENT POLICY

A special use area will be established for off-road vehicle use. When there is insufficient snow cover to protect the soil and vegetation from cutting and erosion, motorized use will occur on designated trails only by non-highway vehicles. An exception will be to allow retrieval of big game. This policy will be put into effect once DNR and ADF&G work with users to map and designate a trail system. See Chapter Three, ORV Management Guidelines, page 160, for more information.



WILDLIFE
FEDERATION
OF ALASKA

The Alaska Affiliate of the
National Wildlife Federation

3.

June 9, 1986

Ms. Margaret J. Hayes
Regional Manager
Dept. of Natural Resources
Box 7-005
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-7005

Dear Ms. Hayes:

The Wildlife Federation of Alaska (WFA) has reviewed the Draft Hatcher Pass Management Plan and we conclude that skiers, hikers, off-road vehicle operators, miners and farmers have been accommodated by the plan. However it appears that, although critical moose habitat has been identified: the Willow Mountain area, adequate measures for its management and protection have not been suggested. A majority of the more than 800 members of the National Wildlife Federation in Alaska are hunters and are very interested in retaining moose production and high quality habitat: the Willow Mountain area.

The western portion of the Willow Mountain area has low mineral potential as you have stated in your plan. Also, there is no history of domestic livestock grazing in the area. However, this area has had a steady increase in hunting activity in recent years. Off-road vehicle activity has resulted in unacceptable habitat loss. Therefore, WFA recommends that in the western Willow Mountain area (including T22N, R2W Section 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34; T21N, R2W Section 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34; T21N, R3W, Sections 1, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25, 26, 35, 36; T20N, R2W, Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, 30, 31; T20N, R3W, Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25) the following items become part of the management plan:

- Classify the area as critical moose habitat.
- Close the area to land disposal.
- Close the area to new mineral entry.
- Limit forestry operations to forest disease control and wildlife habitat enhancement.

- Close the area to grazing

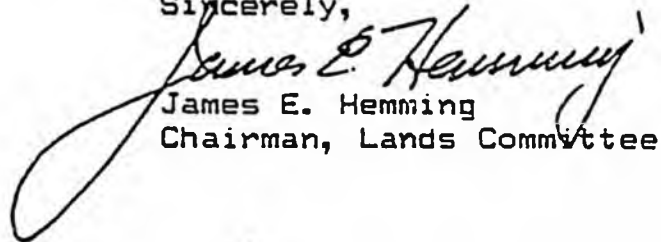
Dames & Moore
5623366 - Jim
Hemming

- Restrict access to moose hunting areas during the snow-free period to designated, clearly marked trails. After six inches or more snow has accumulated, allow the entire area to be used by off-road vehicles for moose hunting consistent with Alaska Board of Game hunting regulations.
- Prohibit any new trail development above timberline.
- Provide a dedicated public access corridor from the Willow Mountain critical moose habitat area to the Hatcher Pass road.

We appreciate all of the planning and coordination that has been accomplished by the Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources on the Hatcher Pass Management Plan. We hope that our comments are useful to you and we look forward to seeing our recommendations incorporated in the plan. Please call me at 562-3366 if you have any questions on our proposals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



James E. Hemming
Chairman, Lands Committee

JEH:nbh

RECOMMENDATION-

The Department of Fish and Game should have the option to conduct habitat enhancement projects in the Hatcher Pass Management Area as deemed necessary by the Department.

(3) Harvest of moose in the Willow Mountain Planning Area will be greatly curtailed if motorized access is prohibited. This is primarily due to the fact that the location of harvest is often too remote from the existing road system to allow recovery of the animal without the aid of an off-road vehicle. Given the capacity of moose populations to fluctuate greatly in numbers depending on range conditions, weather and other factors it would be wise to retain the option of artificially reducing moose numbers through a controlled harvest. Such capacity would be impaired by a restriction on motorized access in the Willow Mountain Planning Area.

RECOMMENDATION-

Motorized access should be allowed for the the sole purpose of retrieving downed big game in the Willow Mountain Planning Area and elsewhere, as is deemed necessary by the Department of Fish and Game. Access outside the hunting season should not be allowed.

The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Hatcher Pass Management Plan. If you have any questions on our recommendations please feel free to contact the Southcentral Alaska representative of The Wildlife Society (Jon Andrew) at 786-3437.

Sincerely

John Schoen, President

(for) Jonathan Andrew



ALASKA FRONTIER TRAPPERS ASSN.

P.O. BOX 2856

PALMER, ALASKA 99645 ☐ (907) 745-1860

376-7025

5 October 1985

Dear Sandra,

The Alaska Frontier Trappers Ass. would like to propose that all lands in the Hatcher Pass Management Plan that are 3000 feet elevation or lower and within the following: T19N,R1W T19N,R2W T19N,R1E T20N,R1W T20N,R2W T21N,R1W T21N,R2W T22N,R1W T22N,R2W; be designated as critical wildlife habitat. This area represents the major habitat area for moose and other wildlife left undeveloped in the lower Susitna Basin. Primary consideration should be for protection, and/or enhancement of the habitat area. This was also mentioned in the draft plan for the Willow Sub Basin (1981) in areas 1B, 15A, and 21.

Recreation values are high for both consumptive and non-consumptive users primarily due to its non-development. Most current uses are compatible within this environment. We feel that development of this area would not be compatible with wildlife habitat.

Lets maintain this area with its primary function as wildlife habitat. We also feel that Fish and Game should have primary control in decisions affecting this area. They have the needed expertise in Wildlife Management.

Michael Peryam

Director, A.F.T.A.





Matanuska-Susitna Borough

BOX B, PALMER, ALASKA 99645 • PHONE 745-4801

BOROUGH ASSEMBLY

February 3, 1987

Jan Faiks, Senate President
State of Alaska
Pouch 7
Juneau, AK 99811

RE: Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area

Dear Senator Faiks:

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly voted unanimously on February 3, 1987 to approve and endorse legislation to create the Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area (approximately 23,000 acres) and to express concern for ensuring that the management intent of the area stays in-tact as described in the Hatcher Pass Management Plan.

If you should have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Dorothy A. Jones
Dorothy A. Jones, Mayor
Matanuska-Susitna Borough

DJ/clb
Enclosure

cc: Commissioner, Dept. of Fish. & Game
Senators Kertrula & Szymanski
Representatives Larson & Menard
✓ Jack Didrickson 7.5-5015

DRAFT

MOOSE SURVEY: PETERS CREEK TO LITTLE WILLOW CREEK (WILLOW MOUNTAIN, portion of GMU 148)

DATE	TM	SM	FN	F1	F2	LC	H	F	C	AD	TM	%H	%F	%C	SM%M	%F2	C/100F	LM/100F
04-Oct-85	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	3	1	4	5	20.0	60.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3
17-Oct-85	13	0	83	26	0	0	13	107	26	122	148	8.8	73.6	17.6	0.0	0.0	23.9	11.9
08-Nov-85	56	5	150	20	2	0	61	180	24	241	265	23.0	67.9	9.1	8.2	9.1	13.3	31.1
18-Nov-85	59	22	160	12	1	0	81	173	14	254	268	30.2	64.6	5.7	27.2	7.7	8.1	34.1
03-Dec-85	53	17	184	27	1	1	70	212	30	282	312	22.4	67.9	9.6	24.3	3.6	14.2	25.0
28-Feb-86	0	0	147	7	1	0	0	155	9	155	164	0.0	94.5	5.5	0.0	12.5	5.8	0.0
31-Mar-86	0	0	111	5	0	0	0	116	5	116	121	0.0	95.9	4.1	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0
17-Apr-86	0	2	51	3	0	0	2	54	3	56	59	3.4	91.5	5.1	100.0	0.0	5.6	0.0
26-Nov-86	21	17	195	87	5	0	100	287	97	395	492	22.0	58.3	19.7	15.7	5.4	33.8	31.7
24-Dec-86	4	2	35	1	0	0	6	36	1	42	43	14.0	83.7	2.3	33.3	0.0	2.8	11.1
15-Jan-87	0	0	7	4	0	0	0	11	4	11	15	0.0	73.3	26.7	0.0	0.0	36.4	0.0
02-Mar-87	0	0	8	3	0	1	0	11	4	11	15	0.0	73.3	26.7	0.0	0.0	36.4	0.0
02-Nov-87	66	17	146	30	2	1	83	178	35	261	296	28.0	60.1	11.8	20.5	6.3	19.7	37.1
17-Nov-87	67	24	131	27	0	1	21	158	28	249	277	32.2	57.0	10.1	26.4	0.0	17.7	42.4
04-Dec-87	41	12	123	25	0	0	60	148	25	208	233	25.8	63.5	10.7	31.7	0.0	16.9	27.7
21-Dec-87	18	7	107	9	0	0	25	116	9	141	150	16.7	77.3	6.0	28.0	0.0	7.8	15.5
12-Jan-88	0	0	48	6	0	0	0	54	6	54	60	0.0	90.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0
28-Jan-88	0	0	45	3	0	1	0	48	4	48	52	0.0	92.3	7.7	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0
27-Mar-88	0	0	28	6	0	0	0	34	6	34	40	0.0	85.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	17.6	0.0
13-Oct-88	34	6	102	20	1	0	42	130	22	172	194	21.6	67.0	11.3	14.3	4.8	16.9	27.7
28-Oct-88	72	42	213	62	1	1	114	274	65	390	455	25.1	60.7	14.3	36.8	1.6	23.6	26.1
15-Nov-88	61	22	163	37	1	0	90	201	32	291	330	27.3	60.9	11.8	32.2	2.6	19.4	30.3
05-Dec-88	24	11	39	14	1	0	35	54	16	89	105	33.3	51.4	15.2	31.4	6.7	29.6	44.4
23-Dec-88	5	4	47	16	0	0	2	63	16	72	88	10.2	71.6	18.2	44.4	0.0	25.4	7.9
15-Jan-89	1	0	41	5	0	1	1	46	6	47	53	1.9	86.8	11.3	0.0	0.0	13.0	2.2

1-18-89

*Jenny
Paula
to
C.C.*

*to Paula
for Bob up
also C.C.
Res. Commis*

JAN 27 1989

JAN 27 1989
PO BOX 2176
Palmer, Alaska

Senator Jay Kerttula
PO Box V
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Senator Kerttula,

Thank you very much for your sponsorship of SB 33 for the Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area.

Habitat protection on these slopes of the Talkeetna Mountains is very important if we are to maintain high moose productivity in a major portion of the Susitna Valley. Willow Mountain is an essential summer feeding area for a large population of moose. More than 1,000 moose rely on the area for successful reproduction, although they may range off the area as far as the Susitna River in hunting season and during the winter.

In addition, it should be pointed out that the primary public value of the proposed Critical Habitat Area is as a support base for fish and game. The economic values of timber, mining, and grazing are minor in comparison to the use the public makes of the area for hunting. Maintaining such areas in the Susitna Basin undisturbed by roads, settlement and logging is essential to protecting the rearing and spawning habitats of valuable Cook Inlet salmon populations downstream.

When you have the opportunity, please put me in touch with state staff members who may have developed maps and inventories of the Willow Mountain Critical Habitat Area. I would be happy to put this kind of information to work among other residents of the Palmer and Wasilla area.

Sincerely,

Mike Bronson
Mike Bronson