

February 1, 2013

ATTN: Board of Game Comments
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Board Members:

I understand that the Board of Game will vote on Proposals 105 and 86 at its upcoming meeting from February 8 -15, 2013. **I strongly support both proposals** and urge the Board of Game to vote "Yes" to stop bear snaring and "Yes" to create a no-trapping buffer zone adjacent to Denali National Park.

With regard to Proposal 105, which would ban grizzly and black bear snaring in the Southwest and Central regions, there is overwhelming agreement among scientists that bear snaring is indiscriminate, cruel and not biologically sustainable. Such snaring is an extremely controversial method of killing animals. It is incomprehensible that the BOG would tarnish Alaska's image by continuing its persistent war on predators. This indiscriminate snaring places females with dependent cubs at risk. Since bears have one of the lowest reproductive rates, modern scientific management principles discourage the harvest of females. In addition, enforcement will be burdensome for Alaska State Troopers, who are already stretched thin.

Snaring presents dangers to other consumptive users, hikers and their pets when confronted with a bear that is caught while its siblings or mother remain free in the area. The possibility of severe injuries or fatalities is obvious. Baited traps also create food-conditioned bears, resulting in animals that associate food with humans, presenting a danger to our communities.

Bears have cultural, economic, and biological importance to Alaskans and those who visit Alaska. Bear snaring is archaic, cruel, and should be banned. It is important to recognize that living bears have a very high value as a tourism draw and source of revenue. Bears are frequently cited as one of the "big three" species visitors come to Alaska to view.

As to Proposal 86, which would re-establish a no-trapping buffer zone adjacent to Denali National Park, it is crucial to provide protection for wolves that wander across the Park boundary onto state land in search of prey or mates, where they are targeted by recreational trappers. It is unconscionable that trapping along the east and south Park boundary has contributed to the significant decline in

wolf populations, and thus viewing opportunities. It is cause for concern when the most recent official survey in Spring 2012 found a total of only 70 wolves in nine packs in the six million acre Park - one of the lowest populations in decades.

In economic terms, several hundred thousand visitors travel to Denali annually to view wolves and other wildlife. Two or three recreational trappers targeting wolves habituated to humans should not be allowed to negate visitors' viewing opportunities, nor the millions of dollars they spend in Alaska.

The loss of only one wolf to the trappers can result in a huge impact on viewing opportunities in the Park. When the alpha female of the Grant Creek pack was trapped and killed just outside the Park boundary in 2012, the pack produced no pups and subsequently dispersed. Over the years, the Grant Creek pack offered hundreds of thousands of Park visitors the best, most frequent opportunities to view wolves in the wild.

Once again, I strongly support Proposals 105 and 86, and urge the Board of Game to vote "Yes" to stop bear snaring and "Yes" to create a no-trapping buffer zone adjacent to Denali National Park. Thank you for your consideration.

Lynn Driessen