ACR #2 – Reinstate the Petersburg Road System Closed Area.

SUBMITTED BY: Joel Randrup

CITE THE REGULATION THAT WILL BE CHANGED IF THIS ACR IS HEARD.

5 AAC 92.510(5)(B). Areas closed to hunting.

5 AAC 92.530(24). Management Areas.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS? STATE IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM.

I am asking the Board of Game to reinstate the Petersburg Road System Closed Area. Opening the Mitkof Highway corridor (mile 8.75 to 17.22, one quarter mile on each side) to archery big game hunting has the potential to be a public safety hazard. The Petersburg Road System Closed Area was established in 1933, extended in 1964, and modified in 1976 to exclude wolves. Until passage of Proposal 67 the corridor was closed to the taking of big game, except wolves.

As hunters, we all want a clean ethical kill and for the animal to die exactly where it is shot, but we also know that is not always the case. An arrow-shot animal may not die where it is shot. Bow hunters generally wait before tracking a wounded animal which may allow it to travel unobserved some distance before it dies and is recovered. It can cross the 100-yard buffer and reach Mitkof Highway, where the posted speed is 50 mph, and cause a vehicle collision.

This newly adopted corridor also includes the boardwalk trail to Blind River Rapids and the Swan Observatory. In addition to the concern for vehicle collisions with big game, arrow-shot dangerous game, including black bears, brown bears, wolves, and the newly adopted mountain lion, could injure members of the public using these sites or recreating along the side of the highway.

Closing the corridor for public safety where there is no biological concern may be in the public's best interest and this request is for public safety and not allocative. The Board of Game has previously accepted an ACR in 2023 in which public safety was a central concern although it was also allocative. The 2004 ADFG report on closed areas recommended status quo stating that eliminating this closed area would result in public safety concerns, p.29 (only available in paper copy at the Petersburg office).

WHAT SOLUTION DO YOU PREFER?

Reinstate the Petersburg Road System Closed Area to its status as it was before the passage of Proposal 67. I am not asking for any other change to the previous regulation, and any changes can be discussed at the next regular cycle meeting for Southeast.

STATE IN DETAIL HOW THIS ACR MEETS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

1) **To correct an error in regulation.**

   Not applicable

2) **To correct an effect of a regulation that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted.**

   The discussion leading up to the passage of Proposal 67 at the meeting in Wrangell included bow hunting near homes and the 100-yard buffer, but there was no discussion about how far an arrow-shot animal can travel, the risk of it reaching Mitkof Highway and colliding with vehicles traveling at speed, or interactions with wounded dangerous game including mountain lion, near the Blind River Rapids trail, the Swan Observatory, with people berry picking and bird watching or other activities along the roadside.

3) **Does the request identify a biological concern for the population or a threat to meeting objectives for the population?**

   Not applicable

4) **Does the request identify an unforeseen, unexpected event or effect that would otherwise restrict or reduce a reasonable opportunity for customary and traditional wildlife uses, as defined in AS 16.05.258(f)?**

   Not applicable.

5) **Does the request identify an unforeseen, unexpected resource situation where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action and such delay would be significantly burdensome because the resource would be unavailable in the future?**

   Not applicable

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THIS PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED PRIOR TO THE REGULAR CYCLE?

Until the next regular cycle, each season in this corridor carries the possibility of a collision between a vehicle and an arrow-shot animal on Mitkof Highway, or a dangerous encounter between wounded dangerous game and the public recreating in the corridor. This ACR would address that risk before the possibility of an accident or injury occurs.

STATE WHY YOUR ACR IS NOT PREDOMINANTLY ALLOCATIVE.

This ACR restores a public safety closure on one narrow highway corridor and does not shift harvest between user groups. Bow hunters keep existing opportunities elsewhere in GMU 3, including the rest of the Petersburg Management Area.

IF THIS REQUEST IS ALLOCATIVE, STATE THE NEW INFORMATION THAT COMPELS THE BOARD TO CONSIDER AN ALLOCATIVE PROPOSAL OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR CYCLE.

Not applicable.

STATE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ISSUE THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ACR.

I am submitting this ACR as an individual and a resident of Alaska. I hunt, trap, and fish and I am a certified bow hunter and a member of the Petersburg AC. I was out of the country when our AC met to discuss Proposal 67 before the Southeast Region Meeting in Wrangell. At our last AC meeting in February, I brought up the idea for my ACR. There was a brief discussion, and we did not discuss it further.

STATE WHETHER THIS ACR HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE, EITHER AS A PROPOSAL OR AS AN ACR, AND IF SO, DURING WHICH BOARD OF GAME MEETING.

This ACR has not been considered before.