

Middle Nenana AC Meeting Minutes

19 Jan 2022

Tri-Valley Community Center

I. Call to order 6:12

II. Roll Call

Present:

Paul Vandyke

Alex Buetow

John Basile

Wayne Valcq

Paul Nyberg

Jacob Mattila

Allen Mortenson

Coke Wallace

ADFG Staff Present:

Tony Hollis

Mark Nelson

AST: Jason Knier

Guests:

Pat Owen

Sam Becket

III. Approval of Agenda

8-approved

IV. Approval of previous minutes

V. 8-approved

VI. Public Comment

Pat Owen, Denali National Park Biologist, gave an update on the past year's wildlife population surveys and observations.

-Wolf surveys show 121 wolves in 12 packs. Slight increase from past surveys.

-Caribou survey shows 2,215. Calf mortality was 11% and cow mortality was 20%, both are high and likely due to deep snow conditions in 2020/2021 Winter.

-Sheep. No ground surveys conducted. 26.7 lambs/ewes

-Moose. No ground surveys conducted. The Park Service has been working on human-moose conflict mitigation by clearing snow from areas where moose can have space from visitors.

-Bears. Park road will be closed for the next 2 summer seasons (Polychrome slide road work), which will allow for a bear research study evaluating the impact on bear behaviors from road traffic. They anticipate radio collaring 20 bears to monitor their travel behaviors with and without traffic over the next several years.

Question from Allan: Is there a correlation between the high wolf and low caribou numbers?

-Answer from Pat: This observation is typical with deep snow that has been seen in the past.

Middle Nenana AC Meeting Minutes

19 Jan 2022

Tri-Valley Community Center

VII. Old Business

Proposals 183,163,189 – no action or discussion taken

VIII. New Business

Tony Hollis, Fairbanks area Wildlife Biologist, presented the Unit 20 local wildlife population survey results.

-Moose twinning rates were as expected at 15%, but would optimally prefer to see 20%+. Unit 20A Fall Surveyed 14,000 moose with 30 bulls per 100 cows. Bull to cow ratio is slightly higher than preferred.

-20A Draw Harvest Results. Moose: 42 cows, 215 any bulls, 20 muzzle loader. Caribou: 71 bulls taken, which is higher than previous years (typically around 50).

-Sheep Population Survey. 362 sheep counted, a record low for this survey area, which is below the previous record low for this area in 2020 at 385 sheep. Of the 362 sheep counted, 16 legal rams were observed in the 2021 survey. Fall 2021 harvest was 44 rams vs 63 taken in 2020. Concerns over population decline as it pertains to full curl regulations are not believed to have an impact. Coke commented that sheep should get a break from hunters for a few seasons to encourage faster recovery.

-Recent local weather concerns. Fairbanks area received almost immediate reports of moose calf mortalities following the Christmas storms (heavy snow fall, followed by rain & heavy snow fall). The depth of the snow is not a concern, but the ice layer caused by the rain is a problem. Funding for winter research include flying for Winter stress survival observations for caribou, sheep, and moose. The public has expressed concerns about low sheep numbers in recent years and the current winter weather conditions have increased these concerns.

-ADF&G requests support for area cow hunts even though no cow drawing permits will be issued in 20A.

-Question from Coke: Have there been talks of predator intensive management hunts (IMs) in Unit 20A?

Answer from Tony: Discussions have taken place, but that's as far as they've gone. Jake commented that hunters should have to show proof of predator harvest in exchange for a sheep harvest tag.

-Question from Paul: Does ADF&G have any thoughts on rescinding any bull draw permits in 20A for 2022 fall season as a result of the poor winter conditions impact on the local moose population?

Answer from Tony: We foresee issuing no cow drawing permits for this hunt area this season. If the current winter weather events continue to affect wildlife populations, we can always close hunts via emergency order (EOs).

Statewide Proposals.

Middle Nenana AC Meeting Minutes

19 Jan 2022

Tri-Valley Community Center

Proposal 230 – Vote 8-0 Opposed. Discussion over legal ram description, reducing the age requirement to 7 years.

Proposal 158 – Vote 7-1 in Support. For the use of Big Game meat for feeding dogs.

Proposal 248 – Vote 3-4 Opposed. To allow non-resident youth to harvest on behalf of a draw permit holder.

IX. Next Meeting February 9th in Healy.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm