



November 1, 2024

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### Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Management Plan

The most recent Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Management Plan (HMP) expired in 2023 (see attached). The Department of Fish and Game (Department) has received several requests by affected Fish and Game Advisory Committees within the range of the Fortymile Herd to convene the Fortymile Caribou Harvest Management Coalition (HMC) and update the HMP, particularly with respect to Alaskan harvest and regulatory approaches.

The expired HMP plan was completed in 2019 and presented to and supported by the Alaska Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board. The HMP served as a management framework for the herd and was used by the Department to help guide management and harvest through the 2023–2024 regulatory year.

Because the purpose of this HMP meeting is for the Alaska members of the HMC to develop recommendations, concerning allocation and regulatory strategies, for harvest that occurs in Alaska, we are focusing on Alaskan representation. Important topics of focus may include:

- allocation of the annual harvest quotas, especially across seasons, geographic areas, and user groups
- exploring alternate regulatory harvest strategies
- methods and means
- strategies to address or mitigate social issues associated with hunter numbers and harvest

The last HMP revision process included a series of 3 meetings during 2017–2019 and was facilitated and funded by the Department. As such, the Department is anticipating a series of 2 to 3 meetings, as needed, beginning this winter to complete the next revision of the HMP. This timeline will allow the Department to seek funding for HMC member participation, develop and distribute information to participants prior to meetings and determine a meeting schedule that works for all participants. Prior membership composition of the HMC is described below. The Department will use these guidelines to contact the appropriate participants for this process.

As outlined in the 2019–2023 HMP:

“Membership of the Harvest Management Coalition (HMC) has evolved over the years. Since the 2001 Harvest Plan, the state advisory committee membership of the HMC has been from the Eagle, Central, Fairbanks, Delta, and Upper Tanana–Fortymile committees. For the 2006, 2012, and 2019 HMP’s, the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council (EIRAC), and members of the Yukon contingent were added to the HMC. The Anchorage and Matanuska Valley AC expressed

strong interest in joining the HMC and were added in 2012. No Matanuska Valley AC representative attended the planning meetings for the 2019 Harvest Plan.

As a result of growth of the Fortymile herd and expanding harvest opportunities, hunters who live outside of its immediate range want to have a voice in how harvest is managed. The HMC agreed that its Alaska membership should expand. The members agreed that even though the coalition should expand, it must not become so large that meetings would be difficult to manage. Furthermore, they expressed the desire that the five original local advisory committees should always hold a majority, and the EIRAC and Yukon contingent should always have representation. Beyond those members there should be two other Alaska seats, not necessarily always Anchorage and Matanuska Valley advisory committees, but people who would represent user groups and appropriate interests.”

The primary role of the Department is to ensure sustainable biological management of the herd using knowledge gained from management, monitoring, and research efforts with contributions from multiple agencies, and input from the public. This includes determining a sustainable herd size within habitat limitations and annual harvestable surplus consistent with the sustained yield principle. In recent years we have focused particularly on using scientific research and biological data to determine when stability or growth in herd size are warranted.

As a result of a smaller herd size, significantly reduced annual harvest quotas, and continued high demand for caribou harvest opportunity near the road system, past harvest strategies may need to be reviewed and revised. HMP recommendations for changes in the hunt structure for the herd in Alaska may require submission of proposed regulatory changes to the Alaska Board of Game and Federal Subsistence Board.

The Department and our management partners will provide technical and financial support to the HMC for this process. We request that you select a member and alternate who will represent your respective group from the following HMC membership. We also suggest that the core HMC membership suggest up to two other user groups with appropriate interests for additional membership to the HMC.

Please respond with selected representatives and suggestions for meeting timing and locations by December 1, 2024.

Initial Distribution list:

Eagle Advisory Committee  
Central Advisory Committee  
Fairbanks Advisory Committee  
Delta Advisory Committee  
Upper Tanana–Fortymile Advisory Committee  
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Sincerely,

*Lincoln S. Parrett*

Lincoln Parrett  
Interior and Northeastern Arctic Regional Supervisor  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
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