

FISH AND WILDLIFE GUIDELINES

1. In order to protect wildlife and provide both consumptive and nonconsumptive recreational opportunities related to wildlife, the Department of Natural Resources and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) will take the following steps:
 - a. **Managing Wildlife Habitat** Management of wildlife habitat is primarily addressed under such other sections as grazing, forestry, and subsurface. In addition, special wildlife habitat features should be preserved where possible, such as snags, beaver ponds/waterways, naturally occurring mineral licks, raptors nest trees, fish and wildlife breeding and seasonal concentration areas, and transition zones. This guideline applies generally to the entire management unit, but the emphasis for implementation of this guideline will be in those subunits where wildlife habitat is a primary use.
 - b. **Protect Important Areas** Disturbance/development in fish and wildlife nesting, calving, spawning and other birthing and rearing areas will be limited by Title 16 of the Alaska Statutes, other statutes and regulations, and the guidelines within this plan.

2. **Locations of Habitat Enhancement Activities**
 - a. **Utilize Existing Roads** Because enhancement activities are expected to be based primarily on timber harvests, the locations of these activities in the near term generally will be in areas with sufficient road access to permit timber harvests. Habitat enhancement activities may take place in the future, in other areas, as access becomes available.
 - b. **Areas Without Roads** Enhancement activities may also occur in areas without roads by utilizing existing trail systems and aircraft (helicopters) as necessary to maintain wildlife species.
 - c. **Grazing Permits** Moose habitat enhancement activities may be conducted on grazing permit areas upon a 30-day notice to the permittee.

3. **Habitat Enhancement Methods** Specific habitat enhancement methods should be determined through consideration of their cost effectiveness, browse production capabilities, and impact on goals for other resources. In addition to timber harvests (see Forestry guidelines), the following methods may be applied.
 - a. **Grazing** Carefully managed intensive grazing is, at this time, an unproven habitat enhancement technique that may improve moose habitat in areas where the growth of browse species is limited by rapidly growing bluejoint reedgrass. Research pilot projects will be conducted at the request of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to determine if using intensive grazing as an enhancement method will reduce competitive grasses.

- b. **Burning** Controlled burning may be used as a means of manipulating vegetation as a method of site preparation, and/or as a means of slash disposal. Guidelines for burning of timber apply to burning for enhancement.
- c. **Heliotorch** Aerial habitat enhancement techniques including the use of the heliotorch may be used in areas without roads.
- d. **Mechanical Crushing/Hydro-axing** Mechanical crushing, hydro-axing, or chain-saw thinning may be used independently or in conjunction with other methods to manipulate vegetation changes. These methods will be used only where salvage of forest products is not feasible.