

Proposal Submitted by Friends of the Yanert, April 29, 2011, to be considered by the Alaska Board of Game at its Interior Region meeting, Spring 2012.

1. Alaska Administrative Code Number: 5 AAC 92.540 (H)(ii)

2. What is the problem you would like the Board to address?

The Yanert Controlled Use Area has been a non-motorized hunting area with road access since 1970. It is an area of low moose density with challenging terrain, one access point and a late-freezing major river. There is pressure from outside of the local region to open this area to motorized access as a way to spread out the issue of overcrowding in other areas elsewhere in Unit 20A. In this case, motorized access cannot be justified by moose abundance and a desire to increase harvests (since the moose density in the Yanert CUA is the lowest in all of 20A). Opening the area to motorized access would bring a myriad of issues to the Yanert area.

Area residents are adamantly opposed to allowing motorized access in the Yanert CUA. When a supplemental proposal to allow motorized vehicle access in this area was brought before the Board in the spring of 2011 at the Central/Southwest meeting (Proposal 232), one third of all comments received were in response to the mentioned proposal, and 100% of these comments were in opposition to allowing motorized access. Concerns of residents include, but are not limited to: the reality that the low moose density of the area does not justify increased access; there is only one legal easement to the area and no parking facilities or waste disposal options at the trailhead; difficulty of access and parking will pose a safety and trespassing issue along the Parks Highway; and motorized access for hunting will pose a safety issue on the trails utilized heavily by local residents, including families.

In addition, there are area residents, as well as residents from around the state, that seek out the quality of the non-motorized hunt found in the Yanert CUA. Should the area allow motorized use, these hunters would find their opportunities severely diminished or eliminated, not only by competition with those hunting by motorized access, but also by the impacts left behind as a result of increased motorized use and waste. There are no comparable options in Unit 20A, and very few statewide, for the type of quality non-motorized hunt found in the Yanert CUA.

3. What will happen if this problem is not solved?

If no action is taken to change the longstanding non-motorized Yanert CUA, then the status quo will remain and there will be no problem. If motorized access for hunting is allowed in the Yanert CUA, there will be unjustified resource degradation, an unreasonable impact to local residents who use the area, and the disappearance of the opportunity for such a quality non-motorized hunt.

4. What solution do you prefer? In other words, if the Board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?

No change in the wording of the current regulation is required.

5. Does your proposal address improving the quality of the resource harvested or products produced? If so, how?

Yes. Maintaining the longstanding non-motorized Yanert CUA will maintain a higher quality of habitat than if motorized access is allowed. There is usually not adequate snow coverage in October for travel by snowmachines, so heavy ORVs will damage the trails and tundra, particularly in the higher elevations of drainages where moose spend much of their winter.

The Yanert CUA has a very low density of moose and allowing for motorized access will not allow for harvest numbers to increase significantly. The push to open the Yanert CUA is not justified by its biological significance or an abundance of the resource. It is motivated by social issues in other areas and allowing motorized access in the Yanert CUA will only spread those social problems of overcrowding, habitat destruction and garbage/waste disposal to the Yanert.

6. a. Who will benefit if your proposal is adopted?

Hunters seeking a quality non-motorized hunt will continue to have a limited area with access via the Parks Highway in which they can carry out a traditional hunt. There are so very few opportunities for this type of hunt and the Yanert CUA, with its low moose density, is the perfect place to remain non-motorized. Local residents will also benefit as trails in the area are heavily used recreationally for walking, running, skiing, skijoring and dog mushing. Allowing for a motorized hunt would pose a significant safety threat, displacing local residents.

6. b. Who is likely to suffer if your proposal is adopted?

No one. The Yanert CUA has been in effect since 1970 and no change to this is being proposed.

7. List any other solutions you considered and why you rejected them.

None