

PROPOSAL 117 – 5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game. Reduce the harvest and possession limits for grouse in Unit 11 as follows:

Grouse -- Unit 11: **Five** [FIFTEEN] per day, **ten** [THIRTY] in possession, **of which not more than two per day and four in possession may be ruffed grouse.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Reduce the harvest and possession limits for grouse in Unit 11. For several years, the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission has been hearing about large groups of hunters from outside the area taking advantage of the current liberal bag limits and harvesting large numbers of grouse along the McCarthy and Nabesna Roads within Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve. For example, a group of four to six hunters hunting for a couple of days could each harvest 30 each, or a total of 120 to 180 grouse. We are concerned about the potential for these high harvest levels to impact the grouse populations, especially during years when recruitment is poor, and believe that reducing the harvest and possession limits would help to address this issue. We are fortunate that good conditions in recent springs have resulted in substantial numbers of birds, however, we will eventually go back to wet springs with less recruitment. Additionally, the lynx population is on the upswing, and they will also have an impact on grouse populations. The smaller harvest and possession limits on ruffed grouse is proposed because they are just coming into this area and limited in number.

PROPOSED BY: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission

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