



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Region 7 - Alaska

1011 East Tudor Road

Anchorage, Alaska 99503

(907)786-3309 (TDD Available)

News

10-20

June 7, 2010

Contact: Larry Bell (907) 786-3431

Decision Reached in Hearing on Unimak Island Predator Control

At a hearing today, District Judge H. Russel Holland announced his decision relative to the State of Alaska's request for a preliminary injunction that would have allowed the State to conduct aerial predator control on Unimak Island in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. In that decision the Judge concluded that a Preliminary Injunction could not be granted in this case because the State failed to make the requisite showing that the Fish and Wildlife Service had withheld or unreasonably delayed action. He also stated that there had not been a final agency action that would result from an analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has consistently maintained that an Environmental Assessment conducted as prescribed by the National Environmental Policy Act is the legal and correct way to determine the best course of action on Unimak, or in any instance where predator control is considered upon a National Wildlife Refuge. We will proceed with such an assessment in the most timely and transparent manner possible, and are confident that this process will result in the selection of a course of action that will allow us to best serve the Refuge's mandates to protect wildlife in its natural diversity and provide subsistence opportunities.

In a related action, the Service announced today that it will issue a Special Use Permit to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to authorize the State to translocate 20 bull caribou from the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd on the Alaska Peninsula to Unimak Island. The State has stressed the urgency of both predator control and bull translocations in part because of the belief that the low bull-cow ratio on Unimak and the island's aging population of bulls will lead to increasingly poorer calf production in future years. We believe this is an important first step that can be taken while the NEPA process is being completed, which will insure that further appropriate, scientifically-justified management actions can be taken.

While the controversy over predator management on Unimak Island has developed, the Service has also issued permits for the radio collaring and biological sampling of wolves and caribou and the access to the refuge required to conduct these activities. We will continue to work with the State of Alaska in this spirit of cooperation and are confident that by doing so, and by fulfilling the legal mandates of the NEPA process, we can serve the best interests of the Unimak herd and the subsistence community that relies upon this resource.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to

public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.