

Proposal 4 Ambler Road Corridor

Close a 2-mile-wide corridor along the Ambler Road to hunting and trapping in Game Management Units 23 and 24.

Proposed by: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Department Recommendation: Support

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Proposal 4 Ambler Road Corridor

Proposed Regulatory Language

5 AAC 92.510. Areas closed to hunting; and 5 AAC 92.550. Areas closed to trapping.
Close a 2-mile-wide corridor along the Ambler Road - as follows:

5 AAC 92.510. Areas closed to hunting. (a) The following areas are closed to hunting as specified:

(21) Units 23 and 24:

(A) the area within 1 mile from each side of the Ambler Road, including the driveable surface of the road is closed to hunting.

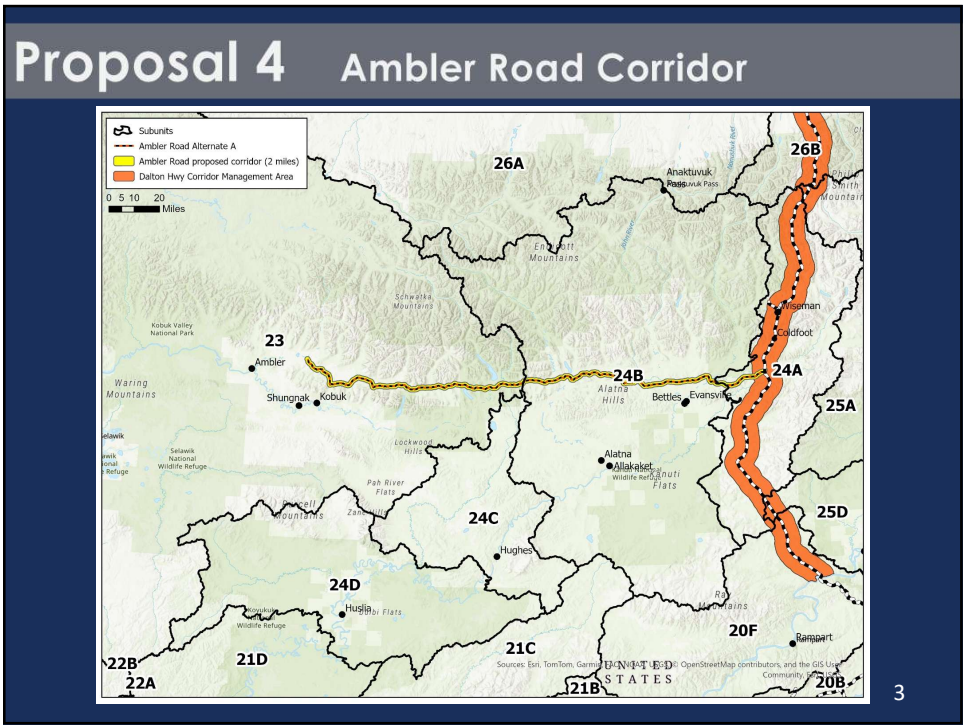
5 AAC 92.550. Areas closed to trapping. The following areas are closed to the trapping of furbearers as indicated:

(11) Units 23 and 24:

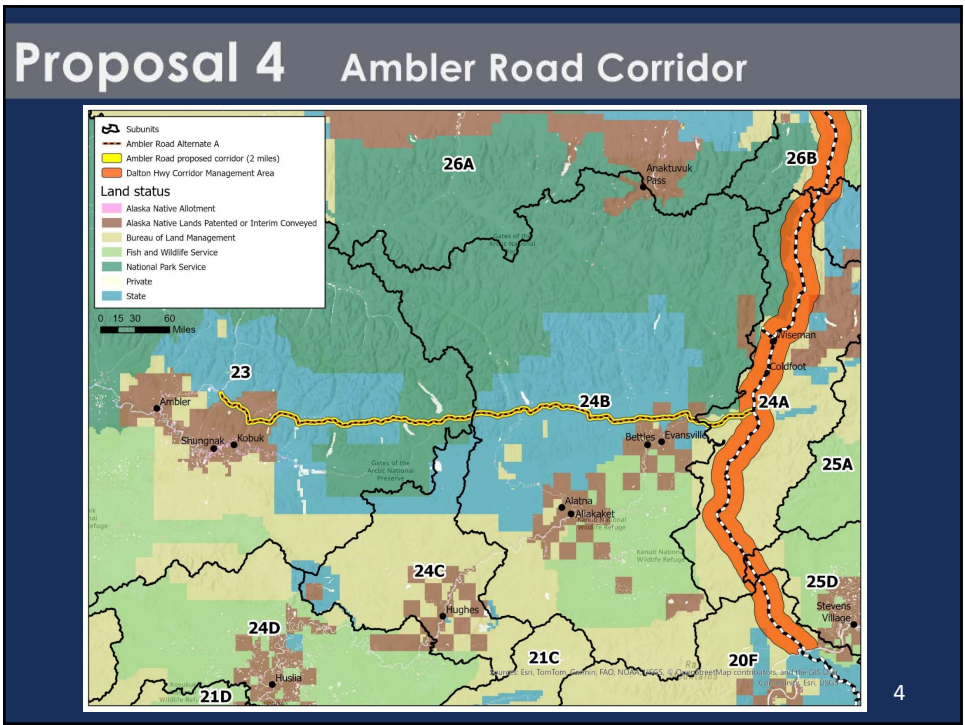
(A) the area within 1 mile from each side of the Ambler Road, including the driveable surface of the road is closed to trapping.

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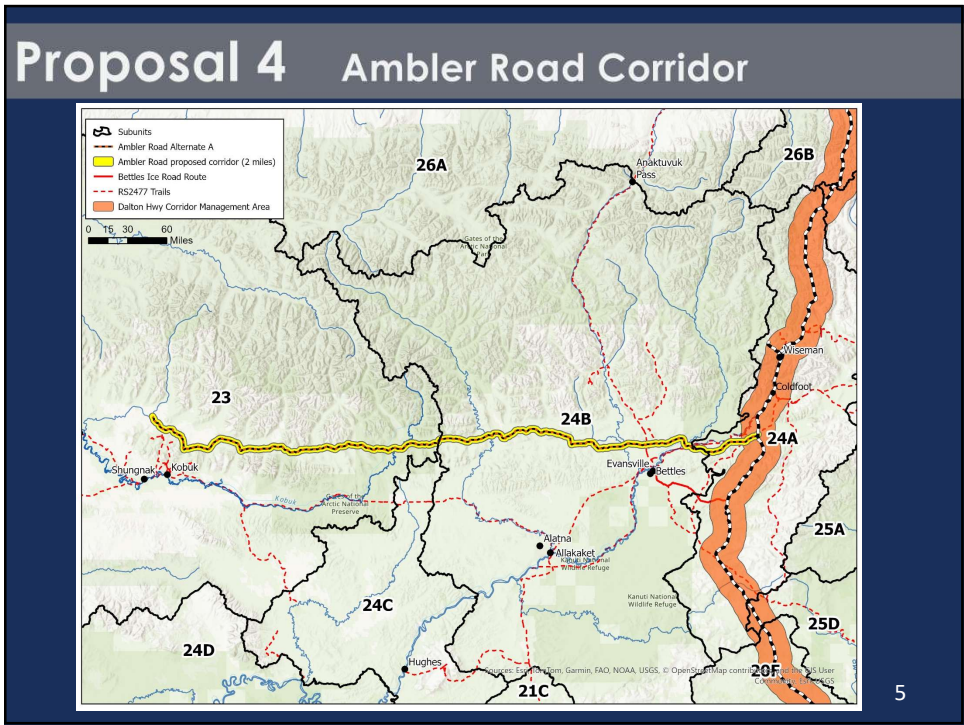
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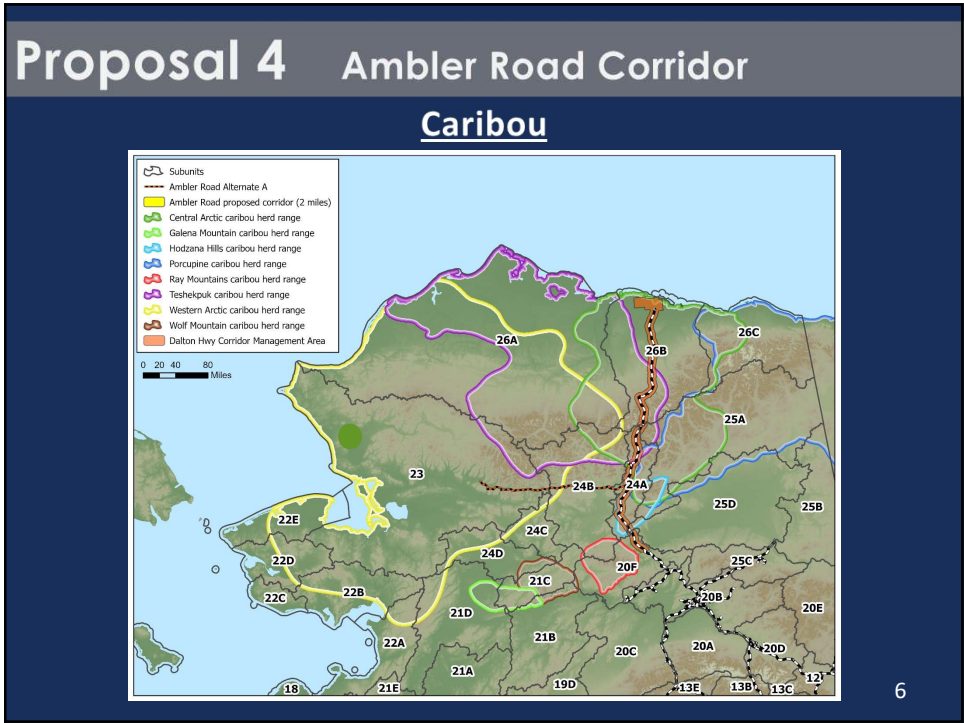
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Caribou Population Information

Western Arctic Herd (WAH):

- 121,000 caribou (2025 survey)
- In decline since 2003 from high of 490,000 caribou
- Historically important winter range in Units 23 and 24, including the area of the proposed Ambler Road route

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Caribou Hunting and Harvest Information

Western Arctic Herd (WAH):

- Subsistence Division Household Surveys
- 12,000 caribou harvested annually
- 675 caribou harvested annually from the communities of Ambler, Kobuk, and Shungnak (Unit 23 Upper Kobuk)
- Additional harvest from the communities of Selawik, Kiana, Noorvik, Kotzebue, and Huslia

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Caribou Population Information

Other Caribou herds to the North, South, and East of the proposed Ambler Road include:

Herd	Population Size
Teshekpuk	62,000
Central Arctic	26,000
Porcupine	143,000
Hodzana Hills	900
Ray Mountains	900
Wolf Mountain	500

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Caribou Hunter and Harvest Information

(5-year average)

Unit 24A (multiple herds):

• Harvest Ticket Reporting

• # hunters = 72 annually

• Caribou harvest = 26 annually

• 82% resident harvest

Unit 24B (multiple herds):

• Harvest Ticket Reporting

• # hunters = 12 annually

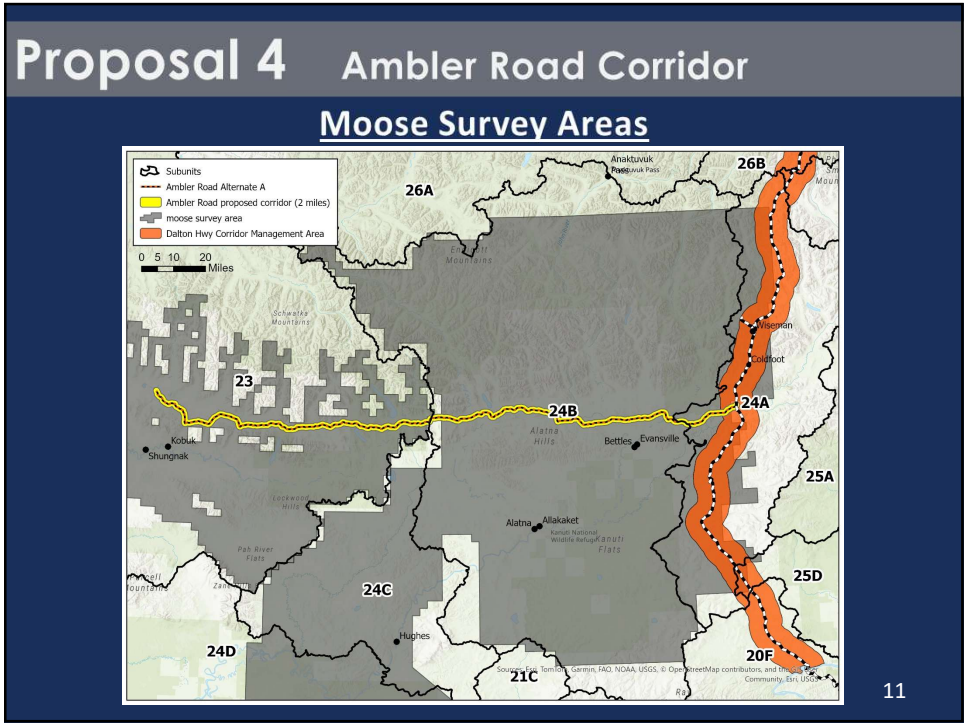
• Caribou harvest = 4 annually

• 50% resident harvest

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Moose Population Information

Unit 24A:

- Population estimate = 790 moose (0.20 moose/square mile)

Unit 24B:

- Population estimate = 3,200 moose (0.24 moose/square mile)

Unit 23 Upper Kobuk:

- Population estimate = 664 moose (0.13 moose/square mile)

All populations characteristic of low density

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Moose Hunter and Harvest Information

(5-year average)

Unit 24A:

hunters = 137 annually

Moose harvest = 37 annually

61% resident harvest

Unit 24B:

hunters = 94 annually

Moose harvest = 39 annually

74% resident harvest

Unit 23 Upper Kobuk:

hunters = 40 annually

Moose harvest = 14 annually

100% resident harvest

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Ambler Road Corridor

Sheep Habitat

The map illustrates the Ambler Road Corridor and surrounding areas. It highlights the proposed corridor (2 miles) in orange, the Dalton Hwy Corridor Management Area in yellow, and sheep habitat (>3000ft) in green. Subunits are labeled with numbers and letters (e.g., 23, 24A, 24B, 24C, 24D, 25A, 25D, 26A, 26B, 20F, 21C). Key locations marked include Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk, Bettles, Evansville, Alutka, and Alakaket. The map also shows the Pah River Flats, Lockwood Hills, and Alutka Hills. A legend in the top left corner defines the symbols for subunits, the proposed corridor, the Dalton Hwy Corridor Management Area, and sheep habitat. A scale bar indicates distances up to 20 miles. Source information at the bottom right credits Tomlin, NOAA, USGS, and OpenStreetMap contributors.

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Sheep Hunter and Harvest Information

(5-year average)

Unit 24A:

hunters = 37 annually

Sheep harvest = 7 annually

39% resident harvest

Unit 24B:

hunters = 7 annually

Sheep harvest = 1 annually

0% resident harvest

Unit 23:

Closed

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Black and Brown Bears

No population surveys for either species

Occur throughout Units 24 and 23 including along the Ambler Road route

Black bear harvest unknown, neither harvest reporting or sealing is required

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Brown Bear Harvest (5-year average)

- Reporting required by registration permits, subsistence permits, and sealing requirements
- **Unit 24A:** 9 brown bears per year, 44% residents
- **Unit 24B:** 4 brown bears per year, 25% residents
- **Unit 23 Upper Kobuk:** 2 brown bears per year, 75% residents

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Muskox

- No known populations exist in Unit 24A, 24B, or the Upper Kobuk in Unit 23
- Some Incidental sightings
- Populations in Unit 23 are expanding
- Potential for muskox to establish themselves near the proposed Ambler Road in future

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Furbearers

- Exist throughout all of Unit 24A, 24B, and 23.
- No surveys except for wolves
- Unit 24B: 14.5 wolves per 1,000 square miles

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Furbearer Harvest (5-year harvest)

- Unknown for many species
- For species sealed by DWC, annual harvest across Unit 24A, 24B, and the Upper Kobuk in Unit 23:

Species	Harvest
Wolf	43
Wolverine	30
Lynx	30
River otter	9

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Small Game and Waterfowl

Grouse, ptarmigan, snowshoe hares are present year round

Waterfowl are present from breeding season in the spring through fall

Harvest data limited: Community Subsistence Information System

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Subsistence Search & Harvest Areas: All Game Resources

This map may not represent all subsistence activity within the map area. To focus on road area use, data were excluded if the aggregated dataset did not include the area surrounding the proposed 2-mile corridor. Fish resource search and harvest areas are not included.

Data source for road route: Bureau of Land Management Ambler Road right-of-way GIS data layer.

Road route is subject to change and is a depiction based on the best available information at the time of map production.

Proposed Ambler Road

Alternative A

Community

Subsistence search and harvest areas for all game resources

Ambler Road 2 mile proposed corridor

Game management unit boundary

Ambler Rd Alternative A

Dalton Highway

Data collection locations and years:

1991: Alutka, Bettles, Hughes

2010: Oulaga

2011: Alaknuk, Alutka, Anaktuvuk Pass, Brown, Evansville, Selawik, Wiseman

2012: Ambler, Kobuk, Minto, Pitmegea, Noorvik, Shungnak

2013: Shungnak

2014: Alutka, Anaktuvuk Pass, Humpy, Hughes, Kotzebue, Narsarsuaq, Narsarsuaq, Rampart, Tanana

2015: Anderson

2018: Selawik, Shungnak

2020: Kobuk

2021: Kiana, Selawik, Shungnak

2022: Ekaika, Kobuk, Koyukuk

2023: Ambler

Unknown year: Ambler, Kobuk, Noorvik, Selawik, Shungnak

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Total Game Resources Pounds Harvested

Resource ^a	Total pounds harvested by most recent comprehensive household survey							
	Alatna (2011)	Allakaket (2011)	Ambler (2024)	Bettles (2011)	Coldfoot (2011)	Kobuk (2012)	Shungnak (2012)	Wiseman (2011)
Large Land Mammals (total)	6,885	24,989	23,998	1,860	325	18,321	56,487	2,888
Black Bear	750	1,764	0	0	325	211	264	0
Brown Bear	0	191	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caribou	3,705	12,350	20,100	780	0	16,173	53,802	520
Moose	2,430	10,260	3,898	1,080	0	1,937	2,421	2,160
Dall Sheep	0	423	0	0	0	0	0	208
Small Land Mammals (total)	320	1,371	685	0	0	663	1,193	18
Birds and Eggs (total)	571.0	1,904	1,111	29	0	1,780	2,501	312

Source ADF&G Division of Subsistence Community Subsistence Information system, accessed 06/29/2026.

Note Combined communities have been excluded due to the age of these surveys and the overlap with individual communities.

Note Subtotals may not add exactly from individual species due to rounding.

a. Only species with harvest in one or more community is incorporated, even if the resource was used.

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Estimated Harvest & Use: All Wild Resources

Community	Year ^c	Number of species ^a		Estimated harvest ^b	
		Used	Harvested	Pounds	Per capita
Alatna	2011	40	32	9,428	299
Allakaket	2011	73	53	76,994	525
Ambler	2024	74	52	48,634	185
Bettles	2011	22	17	2,104	175
Coldfoot	2011	5	1	381	38
Kobuk	2012	50	38	50,743	309
Shungnak	2012	55	36	100,872	367
Wiseman	2011	37	30	3,819	294

Source ADF&G Division of Subsistence Community Subsistence Information system.

a. Includes both game and fish resources; excludes vegetation harvests due to inconsistent collection methods over time.

b. Percapita and estimated pounds includes all wild resources including game, fish, and vegetation.

c. Includes only the most recently available comprehensive harvest survey data.

Estimated Per Capita Harvest: All Wild Resources

Community (Year)	Usable pounds per capita (all resources)
Alatna (2011)	299
Allakaket (2011)	525
Ambler (2024)	185
Bettles (2011)	175
Coldfoot (2011)	38
Kobuk (2012)	309
Shungnak (2012)	367
Wiseman (2011)	294

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Department Comments

- Regulations will only be applicable when road is built
- Proposal largely a part of the planning process
- Closed area represents 0.7% of the total area for all GMUs the corridor crosses
- Closure presents no biological concern for any species
- Impact on animal movement can be mitigated
 - Reduced / suspended traffic / noise
 - Specific to seasons, times, location

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Department Comments

- The closure is estimated to be 211 miles in length and encompass 420 square miles
- Does not exclude crossing to access open areas to hunting and trapping
- Will impact existing traplines that occur within the corridor
- Possible other impacts to existing hunting areas or camps that may be within the proposed corridor

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Department Comments

• Additional regulatory action may be needed during and after road construction

• Subsistence Statute Considerations

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