

Proposals would allow now - forbidden methods for hunting

The Associated Press

Fairbanks — State officials are proposing sweeping changes in regulations to allow subsistence hunters in Alaska to use a variety of hunting methods now forbidden.

If the suggested changes are made, subsistence hunters will be able to use fire, radios, artificial lights, explosives, dogs and large traps to take big game animals.

Details of the proposals mailed out this week by the Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game, were outlined in an article in Wednesday's editions of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

Among other things, subsistence hunters would be allowed to:

—Take caribou the same day as airborne when hunting

on the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleutian Islands and around Bristol Bay;

—Take big game animals while they are swimming;

—Use steel traps with greater than a nine-inch jaw or snares more than 72 inches long;

—Use firearms to take beaver;

"Because subsistence uses are characterized by efficiency and economy of effort and cost, present restrictions which are primarily designed for sport hunting may not be appropriate for subsistence hunting," the proposals explain.

Under state law, subsistence hunters are given first rights to game when the resource

Under definitions adopted in December by the boards, in order to qualify as a subsis-

tence user, a person must show a long-term consistent pattern of use reasonably near a person's residence, with methods traditionally used by past generations and knowledge handed down from generation to generation.

The proposals would allow only subsistence hunters to take black bear in Unit 20 in the Fairbanks area. Caribou and moose hunting also would be restricted to subsistence users in most of Area 20.

In Unit 13, only subsistence hunters in that unit would be allowed to hunt the Nelchina caribou herd.

Only local subsistence hunters would be allowed in most of the Brooks Range but they would be allowed to take three Dall sheep apiece.

Subsistence users would not be required to fill out harvest tickets, but would have to report their annual take.

The boards will meet March 22 to adopt, reject, amend or ignore the proposals. Two days of public hearings will

precede any action.

"We need help from the public on a controversial issue such as this," Clint Buckmaster, chairman of the Joint Boards told the News-Miner. "Just how far do people

want to go? We are information hunting."

A group of sportsmen already is attempting to put on the November ballot an initiative measure to repeal the state's subsistence preference law.