



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR THOMAS H. WAGONER

CHAIR, SENATE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

VICE-CHAIR, SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WHY I JOINED THE ALASKA MOOSE FEDERATION

I am writing this letter to tell of an interesting meeting I had on April 3, 2003 with a new organization in our state. Three individuals with the Alaska Moose Federation, including the Chairman, the Secretary/ Treasurer and the Chief Photographer, came into my office with a completely new concept to help rebuild our state's moose populations. I sensed a real can-do attitude from these individuals concerning a resource that is truly one of the most valuable assets our state has to offer. They asked me if I was wondering, "What do we need another wildlife outfit up here for?" After acknowledging we're on the tail end of about 5 hands-off administrations concerning our wildlife, they proceeded to tell me of some of their plans for working with our new Administration and its Departments of Fish & Game and Natural Resources to begin being proper stewards of our moose.

The Alaska Moose Federation is neither a hunting nor an anti-hunting organization; it is neither a subsistence priority nor an anti-subsistence priority organization, it is solely about more moose. It will also be relatively unique within the outdoor organization community by insisting on salaried staff to perform all of its missions in Alaska. This is a concept that the AMF has learned from outside interests that push millions of dollars into Alaska attempting to manipulate our state for their benefit.

Though very new, they have already begun a very impressive relationship with the Alaska Railroad on reducing moose kills on our tracks. Currently a plan is being created around Cantwell to put fencing along 8 miles of tracks with tunnels placed beneath the tracks to virtually eliminate the current loss of over 100 moose annually. Think its novel? Next time you drive the Glenn Highway between Muldoon and Hiland Roads, take a look at the moose fence running along side the road. You also do not see the moose crossing beneath the road at Ship Creek either. Following this project, plans are to take this concept elsewhere on both our railroad tracks and our roads. The AMF said further plans elsewhere in the state depends on how involved Alaskans get into this organization.

In addition they are looking to begin trans-locating moose from our cities where there is a dangerous surplus to rural Alaska where there is a dangerous shortage. Now think about this one. Our cities have become incubators for moose. Over 650 moose are lost in Alaska's cities annually to vehicle collisions. Typically we loose over 250 moose alone in our Kenai/Soldotna city area. Imagine an outfit that works with the Department of Fish & Game to begin reducing that number by moving these moose to outlying areas away from the roads. They do not plan to remove all the moose by any means but any effort to increase public safety while helping rebuild outlying herds is to be commended.

They have other plans as well but you'll have to go meet them in person at the Kenai Peninsula Sport Show this May. I joined the Alaska Moose Federation because I believe in it. I am concerned for our future generations over whether they will be able to enjoy our unique Alaska lifestyle where all wildlife, including moose, make up our beautiful landscape for everyone to enjoy.

Thomas Wagoner, Senator