

Thank you for reading and considering my comments in Record Copy. I have lived and hunted in Alaska for over 30 years and have spent a considerable amount of my life working with various conservation groups, attending wildlife conferences and serving on various wildlife conservation boards.

Proposal 32

I strongly **SUPPORT** proposal 32 as it's written. I am a longtime Alaskan hunter and have served on multiple conservation boards over the years. In addition I have spent many hours discussing the unit 1D goat populations with area goat biologists. The killing of nannies instead of billies is easily avoidable with careful observation and training. It should be the responsibility of all hunters to correctly identify the target animal or not take a shot. If hunters are unable/unwilling to make a careful assessment before shooting, there should be consequences and then consequences should be designed to protect the population. In this case the proposal is well thought out and should be passed.

Proposal 59

I strongly **SUPPORT** proposal 59 and am also the author of that proposal. Changing RG231 to an archery only hunt would have multiple benefits. First, it would likely decrease the taking of nannies because bowhunters spend much longer periods of time observing goats at much closer ranges. Second, the overall harvest rate would be decreased because of the decreased harvest rates seen across the state for archery vs rifle hunters. This would result in more or equal hunting opportunities combined with a decreased overall harvest.

Proposal 60

I strongly **SUPPORT** proposal 60 to create an archery season for unit 6 from 11/1-11/15. There is currently no archery season for deer hunting in this region of the state and creating one during the rut would provide opportunities for hunters choosing archery equipment to safely hunt during the deer's most vulnerable time period. There is an overall increase in hunting pressure in many parts of unit 6 and transitioning to archery only during this time would maintain or even increase hunting opportunity while creating a net decrease in the harvest due to the lower harvest rates associated with archery hunting.

Proposal 66

I strongly **SUPPORT** proposal 66. There is currently no area in Kodiak where hunters can use archery equipment without risk of hunting in close proximity to rifle hunters. I have hunted Kodiak with my bow for 11 years and can attest that while the goat population is overall robust, the goats are generally concentrated into a dozen or so areas, most of which are heavily used during the hunting season. Setting aside just one area for archery only would create an opportunity of archery hunters to safely hunt without the risk of being shot over/at while stalking goats at close range.

Proposal 82

I strongly **OPPOSE** proposal 82. I have had the Eklutna area archery permit (DS141) in the past and can attest that there are several groups of rams that move back and forth from the archery area into the East Fork area that is not open during DS141. If there were rifle hunters in the East Fork it would have a large negative affect on the quality of the archery draw hunt and would also bring more rifle hunters into the east fork trail system when there are high numbers of non-hunting recreational users in the area. If anything, **I would recommend including the**

East Fork of the Eklutna in the DS141 draw hunt which would allow the DS141 tag holders to spread out a little from what can currently be a fairly congested hunt.

Proposal 85

I **SUPPORT** proposal 85. I have spent extensive time in the proposed hunting area and feel that the area could support an archery draw hunt for a limited number of billies each year.

Proposal 87

Compared to most western states Alaska has very limited bowhunting opportunities. I **SUPPORT** the initiative to provide an archery moose season in unit 14C. This would provide increased hunter opportunity with minimal to no impact on the moose population.

Proposal 88

I strongly **SUPPORT** proposal 88 and am the author of that proposal. RM445 has proven to be a popular and effective way for local hunters to fill their freezers using archery equipment without worry of being shot at or over by rifle hunters (an increasingly unique situation for road accessible moose hunting in Southcentral Alaska). Compared to most western states Alaska has very few opportunities for hunters who prefer the challenge of archery hunting and RM445 has proven popular for being one the few archery hunts in this region of the state. Through close monitoring by ADFG the moose population has done well despite enthusiastic participation in the hunt. Expanding the hunt to a larger portion of the Chugach State Park Management Area would spread out pressure and improve hunter experience while having no adverse affect on the game population due to the lower success rates of archery equipment. This would also reduce possible non-hunting user conflict in the increasingly busy Chugach State Park in which the use of centerfire rifles in popular hiking areas is increasingly a concern of multiple user groups.

As with all archery hunts it should be reiterated that an archery hunt does not decrease opportunity for any hunter. Any hunter can choose to use a bow to take part in these hunts.

Proposals 90-93

SUPPORT

Proposal 108

I **SUPPORT** this proposal for sheep but would only ask that the BOG consider creating this registration hunt as **some form of weapon restriction hunt such as Blackpowder or Archery** only. This would preserve hunting opportunity for all Alaskan Resident hunters and would decrease harvest compared to the current situation with unlimited rifle hunting during the season.

Proposal 110

I strongly **SUPPORT** proposal 110 and I believe that this is the best possible solution to address the concerns of decreasing sheep population in this area without decreasing hunter opportunity. The proposal itself lists the benefits of a transition to a registration archery hunt.

As the author of that proposal I would like to add several points of clarification:

- 1) It would be my intention to **make it illegal to do any aerial scouting during any sheep hunt** in the state including this proposal for units 7 and 15. If this proposal is passed I would strongly recommend amending it to read **“no aerial scouting during any time of year when there is any open season for sheep”**
- 2) **ADFG will have discretion to limit the take to a predetermined number of full curl rams and promptly end the hunt when that number has been taken.**

I believe that with the addition of these amendments to the proposal that making units 7 and 15 archery only registration hunts would maintain hunting opportunity for all hunters (they just have to take a bow instead of a rifle) while having essentially zero impact on the sheep population. There is strong precedent for this in Canada, as listed in the proposal, where these hunts have proven popular and are a well accepted management strategy.

In times of sheep scarcity we should embrace weapons restrictions hunts as an alternative to closures or draw hunts. These kinds of hunts allow everyone to continue enjoying being in the mountains hunting sheep but will dramatically decrease the harvest, thereby allowing maximum survival of all cross sections of the sheep herd including mature rams. There is speculation and ongoing studies suggesting that there may be population benefits to allowing more legal rams to survive hunting season and archery hunting will allow for this without taking away hunting opportunity.

Proposal 111

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survival of all cross sections of the sheep herd including mature rams. There is speculation and ongoing studies suggesting that there may be population benefits to allowing more legal rams to survive hunting season and archery hunting will allow for this without taking away hunting opportunity.

I will add that every person I've met who enjoys sheep hunting has openly stated that sheep hunting is not about killing an animal but rather about spending time in the country that sheep inhabit and being around these amazing animals. This is a very popular sentiment that I have heard over and over again and reinforces the point that implementing weapons restrictions hunts such as this proposal will allow sheep hunters to do what they love while still reducing the overall impact on the sheep population.

Proposal 112

I **Support** 112 for all of the reasons stated above in my support of the 110 and 111.

Proposal 113

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Proposal 114

I strongly **support** proposal. If this hunt is again deemed to be viable based on goat populations in the area, then it makes sense to transition it to an archery only hunt. Archery hunting in this popular hiking area will decrease perceived danger and noise for non-hunting users and will have a lower likelihood of affecting the population. Furthermore, archers are much less likely to kill a nanny because of the increased observation and stalking time required for bowhunting.

Proposal 116 and Proposal 117:

I strongly **SUPPORT** proposals 116 and 117. I am a longtime Alaskan hunter and have served on multiple conservation boards over the years. In addition I have spent many hours discussing the unit 7 and 15 goat populations with goat biologists. The killing of nannies instead of billies is easily avoidable with careful observation and training. It should be the responsibility of all hunters to correctly identify the target animal or not take a shot. If hunters are unable/unwilling to make a careful assessment before shooting, there should be consequences and then consequences should be designed to protect the population. In this case the proposal is well thought out and should be passed.

Proposal 119

I strongly **Support** proposal 119. Archery hunting provides increased hunting opportunity with minimal to zero adverse affect on game populations.

Proposal 120

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Proposal 203

I **Support** creating a moose hunt for people with greater than 70% disability in the Kincaid Park area with short range weapons.

Proposal 204

I **Oppose** proposal 204. If there is any biological data demonstrating that killing legal rams has a detrimental affect on the population then there are much better alternatives to a blanket closure.

- 1) **Close the hunt to non-residents but leave it open to resident hunters.** This kind of hunt would be consistent with the Alaska constitution and would still lead to a dramatic decrease in the total number of rams killed.
- 2) Keep the hunt open but change it to **Archery only** or another form of a weapons restricted hunt. This would also allow for no change in hunting opportunity while dramatically reducing the impact on the sheep population. This is a “win/win” with essentially no downside. It is worth reminding the reader that archery only hunts are available to all hunters, they simply require a different weapon.

Thank you very much for reading and considering my comments. I had planned to be there in person but an unforeseen work obligation prevented me from being able to travel to Soldotna this week.

Sincerely,

Paul Forward