

Proposal 82: Strongly OPPOSE.

I have been living and hunting in Alaska for well over 30 years and have spent much of that time hunting and recreating in the Chugach Mountains. I have spent many hours at ADFG discussing sheep populations with local biologists and have hunted sheep on several draw hunts in 14c over the years including the Eklutna Management area archery sheep hunt DS141 in 2017.

Based on this I strongly oppose this proposal. During my time sheep hunting in the Eklutna area, both during my hunt and when helping friends who have drawn the same tag, it has become very apparent to me that many of the rams who reside in the bold peak area move back and forth between the East fork drainage and the main eklutna drainage, frequently crossing then hunt boundary. If the rifle draw tags included the East Fork rifle hunters and bow hunters would be competing for the same rams, likely on the same dividing ridge lines. This decreases the quality of the experience for both and could prove dangerous.

The DS141/241 hunt is one of the only opportunities many hunters will ever hope for the pursue sheep with their bow in the Chugach and creating a rifle hunt that almost overlaps with one the most concentrated sheep areas will be very detrimental to the hunting experience.

Rather than adding the East Fork to the Rifle hunts, it would make much more sense to just expand the hunting area for DS141/241 to include the east fork.

In addition DS140/240 already allows archery hunting in that area and allowing rifle hunters to hunt the area prior to the later archery draw season makes very little sense. Please keep that area for archery hunting.

In addition, the time period when during which DS124, DS125 DS126 and DS224 take place will place rifle hunters in that area during peak non-hunting recreation periods. The east fork trail is a very popular hiking and climbing area and August/September is peak season. Allowing rifle hunting for sheep, even just for a few permit holders, will create significant potential for user conflict.