

**ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES AND ALASKA BOARD OF GAME
REGULATION PROPOSAL FORM
PO BOX 115526, JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-5526**

BOARD OF FISHERIES REGULATIONS

- Fishing Area
 Subsistence Personal Use
 Sport Commercial

JOINT BOARD REGULATIONS

- Advisory Committee Regional Council Rural

BOARD OF GAME REGULATIONS

- Game Management Unit (GMU)** Region III
 Hunting Trapping
 Subsistence Other
Resident
 Nonresident

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. All answers will be printed in the proposal packets along with the proposer's name (address and phone numbers will not be published). Use separate forms for each proposal.

1. Alaska Administrative Code Number 5 AAC _____ Regulation Book Page No. _____

2. What is the problem you would like the Board to address?

Dall Sheep Conservation, Unlimited Nonresident Sheep Hunting Opportunities and Unlimited Guide Numbers in parts of Region III

In many parts of Region III (excluding GMUs within USFWS and NPS lands) where we have open general season sheep hunts, there are no limits on the number of nonresident hunters or the guides they are required to hire to hunt sheep. Because nonresident guided hunters have such a higher success rate than resident hunters, this has led to localized overharvests of sheep and diminished populations, as well as crowding and conflicts between guides and resident hunters and guide-on-guide conflicts among an unlimited number of guides licensed for the same area.

Conservation and sustainability of sheep populations has not been successful under a full-curl only harvest regulation that allows for nearly every full curl ram to be taken each season, as is happening in some areas. We need to leave more full curl rams on the mountain to breed in late November at the peak of the rut, in order that they dominate the breeding and younger sub-dominant rams aren't overly taxed in competing for ewes that it affects their overwinter survival.

The prospect of resident sheep hunting going to draw-only, as it has in other areas with similar problems, is another reason to implement better conservation strategies.

Delays in implementing the proposed DNR Guide Concession Program (GCP) should not hamper the Board's attention to these conservation issues, and as the earliest possible implementation of the GCP is now 2013, the time to act on sheep conservation is now.

3. What will happen if this problem is not solved?

Continued localized depletions of full-curl rams that threaten population sustainability and resident general open season sheep hunting opportunities, continued user conflicts and crowding, and continued inequitable nonresident sheep harvest rates of 40% annually in much of Region III.

4. What solution do you prefer? In other words, if the Board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?

All nonresident sheep hunts in Region III where we have general open season (non-draw) hunts for nonresidents (excluding units within USFWS and NPS lands) become draw only, require a signed guide-client agreement before or at time of permit application, and the number of permits is capped based on sheep density and population estimates conducted by ADFG so that nonresident harvest does not exceed 15-20% of the year's estimated harvestable surplus. These stipulations would not apply to any nonresidents hunting with a 2nd degree of kindred.

We also recommend incorporating some kind of post-hunt adult ram threshold when determining how many permits to issue for each GUA, so that we ensure we are leaving a

certain percentage of adult rams in the population each year. ADFG would also need discretionary authority to limit permits based on weather events and high winterkill numbers.

5. Does your proposal address improving the quality of the resource harvested or products produced? If so, how?

Yes. By limiting nonresident sheep hunting opportunities in much of Region III we thus limit the guides they must hire, thereby reducing sheep harvests. This will result in more full curl rams on the mountain to breed in November, less sub-dominant ram winter mortality, and will improve the quality of sheep hunts for both guided and undguided hunters by reducing crowding and conflicts afield.

6. Solutions to difficult problems benefit some people and hurt others:

A. Who is likely to benefit if your solution is adopted?

All those who truly put the resource first and wish to see our Region III sheep populations conserved and sustained. All resident hunters. All guided nonresident hunters who want a more quality sheep hunt without the crowding and conflicts we currently have in many areas.

B. Who is likely to suffer if your solution is adopted?

Some guides could suffer monetarily because of fewer nonresident clients. Division of Wildlife Conservation funding would decrease due to fewer nonresident sheep tags being sold, and some local economies could see a decrease in nonresident hunting-related tourism. (It should be noted that these are the same effects implementation of the Guide Concession Program, which is supported by the Board, would have.) Nonresident sheep hunters would lose the guarantee to be able to hunt Dall sheep in parts of Region III, and would have to take their chances with a draw-only hunt.

7. List any other solutions you considered and why you rejected them.

Cap nonresident allocations at 10-15% of harvestable surplus based on density and population estimates.

Rejected because we want to have a bit higher nonresident sliding scale allocation cap that will encourage support from more guides and other organizations.

Base nonresident draw permit sheep allocation caps on most recent 10-year harvest figures instead of density/population estimates and actual harvestable surplus.

Rejected because in many areas the last ten years of harvests have been beyond what is sustainable. If ADFG is unable to conduct current sheep density and population estimates on which to base harvestable surplus and nonresident permit numbers, a better method than basing those on harvest records is needed.

Create Region III registration sheep hunts for residents in all general (non-draw) open season areas, implement mandatory harvest reporting period, give ADFG discretionary authority to close some sheep hunts based on harvest reports, in conjunction with our proposed solution.

Rejected as unneeded at this time. However, given that the priority is sheep conservation and continued sheep hunting opportunities, resident sheep hunters need to be aware that

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this type of approach may be necessary, and preferable, to a draw-only hunt in the future.

September 1st start to all Region III sheep hunts where general open season (non-draw) regulations apply.

Rejected. We really need to continue to provide youth/family hunting opportunities prior to the school term. Making many resident hunters choose between sheep or moose hunting isn't the preferable avenue to fix the problems we outlined.

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