

Paul A Forward
Resident of Girdwood, Alaska

Pertaining to proposal: **2**

Comments:

Dear Board of Game, I was hoping to attend this BOG meeting in person but due to Covid related childcare changes I am not able to travel over this period of time.

I am the author of the Proposal 2 and am writing on behalf of myself only. I have been listening in to the meeting via the video and have read through the comments submitted pertaining to Proposal #2 and feel the need to clarify several things.

- 1) There has been mention by several people that a bowhunting season would provide “special privileges” to a select group of people. It’s obvious but worth stating that any hunter in Alaska can easily be eligible to take advantage of these seasons by the simple act of taking up archery.
- 2) Furthermore, related to the “special privileges” standpoint, Proposal provides a “give and take” with the “Choose your Weapon” clause. With this in place, any hunter who chooses to take advantage of this would give up the option to rifle hunt during the regular season.
- 3) There has been concern that because Alaska’s sheep population is generally in decline, adding additional opportunity could create further pressure on sheep populations. In response to this, I’d say that if you adopt the “choose your weapon” option, many of the hunters who accept the challenge of archery hunting sheep are the same people who are traditionally very successful rifle hunters. Limiting some of these more experience hunters to archery equipment would likely *decrease* the overall ram take.
- 4) There are simultaneously comments saying that the hunting areas are so vast that archery hunters should have no problem finding places to hunt while others complain that archery hunters would create competition and interruption with the youth hunt. The reality is that there are some areas that are more easily accessible and others that are more remote. The few hunters who will give up their rifle season in order to have 5 extra days to Bowhunt will be spread out through a variety of areas and will be very unlikely to interfere with youth hunters.
- 5) Most importantly, for years we have heard at these meetings the concern that bowhunters will displace sheep away from their usual areas, thus creating problems for rifle hunters. While I can understand why they might think this, I do wonder how many people who’ve made that claim have spent significant time bowhunting for sheep. I have done it quite a bit and have on many occasions targeted a specific ram and watched their movements for weeks while being pursued by me or other hunters. In my experience it is possible to bump rams into tougher terrain but they almost always resume previous behavior after 48-72 hours, at most 4-5 days. With this in mind, staging the hunt from 8/1-5 is very unlikely to interfere with anyone’s rifle hunting.
- 6) Regarding the late season hunt instead. As many have said, it’s a poor options because of weather and the fact that many rams have already been killed in many areas. Aside from the Dalton Highway and a few registration and draw hunts for other species, Alaska, particularly Southcentral Alaska, has very few opportunities for those who prefer to the challenge of hunting with bow and want to do so in a way that is safely separated from those hunting with rifles.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this proposal and other archery hunting opportunities.
Paul Forward