

RC 067

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Proposal 207

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I strongly disagree with proposal 207 for various reasons. Proposal is most of all unequitable as well as impossible to enforce. My personal experience with sheep hunting is this..... In most cases my sheep hunting is done "spur of the moment". My busy schedule in the summer has me in a position where I cannot be gone from work more than a few days. Because of this, I have spent almost ten years developing skills that allow me to put my aircraft into places that others may not. This is what some people call an "unfair" advantage. The point is, everybody has the same opportunity in this country. Anybody, if they choose can have an airplane and learn to fly it. All it takes is dedication, time, and some degree of risk. When it comes to sheep hunting, if your body is in better physical shape, you have the proper gear, and you have the knowledge, you should have the advantage on a hunter that does not devote themselves to a better hunting experience. So, if a hunter has more of an advantage to be successful, should they have to give that up? Should they be limited on the quality of their gear, or the physical shape your body is to go hunt? I think not. If we are just talking about transportation, should we limit four-wheeler opportunity as well? How is it fair to limit a pilot and his plane and the advantage that he has made for himself? Some hunters have better ATV's than others, that is an advantage they have built for themselves. Should we punish them too? Should we strip the advantages from them? Yes, this is the land of "equal opportunity" but this is for those who work to make these opportunities.

Many other issues come up when thinking about limiting aircraft use. Not being able to scout for sheep during the hunting season will have negative consequences.

- 1) Waste of Tax dollars when troopers spend time investigating complaints of aircraft flying through the mountains during season. Sheep hunters are not the only people flying in these areas. Proving that somebody was actually scouting for sheep, and not just flying in the area would be virtually impossible, and realistically unenforceable. All it will do is waste time for authorities.
- 2) Too much air traffic just prior to season opening. Pilots may be in a panic just before season to find "their sheep" causing congested air traffic in hunting areas which could lead to midair collisions due to pilots looking at the ground while flying. If scouting cannot be done during season, then the amount of traffic will increase in hunting areas before season. A high volume of traffic at one time will most certainly have an effect on sheep as well pushing them into undesired terrain.
- 3) Unfair advantage to non-resident hunters, air taxis, and guides on state lands. Not being able to scout during the season would only give non-residents and state land guides a bigger advantage. Because the typical working resident hunter does not turn their attention to hunting until its actually time to go, many hunters would not be able

to scout out an area. The guides on the other hand would have the time to devote to look for animals and pick out areas prior to hunting season as well as "stake claim" to an area

Changing the time span we must wait to hunt to 48 hours would be devastating to hunting opportunities for resident hunters with aircraft.

- 1) This part of the proposal will eliminate opportunity for kids to experience sheep hunting. Now day's attendance rules are getting tight in our school system. My personal experience is taking the kids hunting on the weekend works, and although not always successful they still get the experience and opportunity to hunt. If we just wanted to go on a camping trip we would go on the off season. Balancing school and hunting season is already challenging for parents and I believe this regulation would add to the stress and may prompt people into not taking kids at all.
- 2) Unethical hunters would have larger opportunity to encroach on your possible harvest. If a 48 hour wait time was mandated this would allow other aircraft, four wheelers, and walk-ins to encroach on an area that you have been waiting to hunt. One question to ask yourself. How would you like it if you have been watching a ram for 30 hours after hiking in for 6 hours and some body shot that ram in front of you? It will happen and it will either cause conflict in the field or more hunters breaking the law.
- 3) Waiting 48 hours changes logistics. Aircraft are often loaded to maximum capacity when setting out for a hunt. Adding a mandatory two days to the length of a hunt would force hunters too carry more supplies in an already loaded aircraft. Waiting 48 hours also forces a hunter to carry a spike camp. This could ultimately lead to more days in the field after a harvest. Weather will also play a huge factor on the hunt if forced to wait 48 hours.

In conclusion, when a problem arises, (and this is our problem), one should not try to eradicate the problem simply by proposing a bunch of ill-thought/inadequate restrictions. The problem should be addressed by going to the source and proposing a restriction on non-residents, thus immediately improving conditions, as well as being "just" to hard working Alaska residents who hunt as part of the Alaska lifestyle. This is a solution that has been proven, not some unenforceable proposal that is just "something to do". Let's save the Alaska life for us and the generations to come. That means not allowing non-resident hunts to take over, and it does not mean we restrict Alaska resident hunters.

- Singling out one specific group of hunters (residents with aircraft) is not a fair way to try and solve a problem. Proposal 207 is doing just that.