



THE STATE  
of ALASKA

GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Department of Fish and Game

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
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An Agenda Change Request (ACR 4) has been submitted to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.055. The proponent is asking the board to open a resident only general season sheep hunt beginning in regulatory year ( RY) 26 from Aug 10 – Sept 20 in Unit 19C. This would mean the resident drawing permit hunt DS196 would not be required in RY26.

With respect to the board's Agenda Change Request (ACR) acceptance criteria (5 AAC 92.005):

- A. The department is unaware of any error in regulation.
- B. The department is unaware of any effects of regulations that were unforeseen when the regulation was adopted.
- C. Biological concerns. Current sheep survey data in Unit 19C indicate there was a large decline in total sheep numbers beginning after the winter of 2018/2019. This pattern is similar to many other areas of the state. This decline is largely thought to be based on winter weather events. 2025 sheep surveys indicated that sheep remained at historically low levels. Although full-curl hunt management is a very conservative approach, due to public concerns over sheep populations, a Unit 19C sheep working group was formed by the board to address sheep management in Unit 19C.
- D. The department is unaware of any unforeseen or unexpected events that would otherwise restrict or reduce a reasonable opportunity for customary and traditional wildlife uses as defined in AS 16.05.258(f).
- E. The department is unaware of any unexpected resource situation that would cause a biologically allowable resource harvest to be precluded by delayed regulatory action.

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for sheep in Unit 19, and an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 1-5 sheep. In March 2023 the board passed Proposal 204 which closed the Unit 19C youth hunt as well as all nonresident hunting for a 5-year period. At the same time, the board also formed the Unit 19C sheep working group to address sheep management in Unit 19C. In November 2024 the board accepted ACR 5 which was submitted by the working group, which was heard by the board in March 2025 as Proposal 190. The board passed Proposal 190 which closed the general season hunt for both residents and nonresidents and established a drawing permit hunt for residents and nonresidents for a 2-year period beginning in RY26. There remains in place a winter registration permit hunt (RS380) for residents only with a bag limit of one sheep with  $\frac{3}{4}$  curl horn or smaller; excluding rams with both tips broken, lambs or ewes with lambs during October 1 – April 30. The structure of this hunt provides subsistence opportunity according to the pattern of customary and traditional uses. RS380 was closed by emergency order in RY20 and has had a restricted bag limit of rams only since RY21 due to biological concerns of ewe harvest.

The change requested by this ACR is primarily allocative. The current regulatory structure was recommended by the Unit 19C working group in ACR 5 (November 2024) and was adopted by the board as Proposal 190 (March 2025). The current drawing permit hunts (DS190 for residents only, DS 197 for nonresidents accompanied by an Alaska-licensed guide, and DS198 for nonresidents accompanied by a resident relative within second-degree of kindred) are only in place for a 2-year period, after which time the working group and board will reassess future management of sheep in Unit 19C. Additionally, resident hunters are currently applying for DS196 and passage of this proposal would negatively affect their efforts as they are limited to how many sheep drawing permit hunts they can apply for.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting for the Interior and Northeast Arctic Region and Unit 19 is during winter/spring of 2026/2027. Proposals for this meeting are due May 1, 2026 and bringing this proposal up during the Region 3 cycle will allow for greater public participation. If the board accepts this ACR, the department recommends the resulting proposal be addressed at the March 2026 board meeting in Kodiak to allow for additional public input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ryan Scott".

Ryan Scott  
Director  
Division of Wildlife Conservation