

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/1/2018 8:00:00 AM

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Title:

Comments: The Alaska Farm Bureau strongly urges removing the language on page 69 #14 that would prohibit domestic sheep & goats from being on Chugach National Forest lands.

National Forests are Congressionally mandated to be managed with multiple use principles. These lands are to be managed in a way to meet [ldquo]the nation[rsquo]s need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, food, timber and fiber from public lands[rldquo]. With a mission to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of these forests to meet the needs of present and future generation, the forest service should not be considering banning an entire user group without a science-based justification.

Extreme changes in land management like this need to go through the proper review process as set out under NEPA; consideration of environmental effects including impacts on social, cultural, economic and natural resources.

The proposed action of prohibiting domestic sheep & goats from being on CNF lands is an unjustified reaction to the discussion of respiratory pathogens in sheep and goats, specifically mycoplasma ovipneumoniae (M.ovi), and the fear that domestic sheep and goats will cause a pneumonia outbreak in Alaska[rsquo]s Dall sheep and Mountain goats. Findings from current studies indicate extreme steps like this are unnecessary. Contrary to previous assumptions, species other than sheep and goats carry M.ovi. It also appears this might be a pathogen endemic to wildlife, including Dall sheep, Mountain Goats, moose, caribou, bison, and deer.

Rigorous testing conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game in conjunction with the Office of the State Veterinarian have shown positive tests for the above listed wildlife and, apart from a caribou, all have appeared healthy. The animals testing positive have been all around the state, including in the Brooks Range which is not near domestic sheep or goats.

If the CNF moves forward with implementing this ban, it will be based on incomplete/bad science. This ban would also limit resources that could be used to control invasive plants and managing fuel loads that could feed hazardous wildfires.

Please manage CNF lands as mandated and remove #14 on page 69 that would prohibit domestic sheep and goats from being on CNF lands.

CNF Draft Land Management Plan comments

Attached please find comments that Alaska Farm Bureau, Inc would like to submit on the CNF Draft Land Management Plan.

Thank you,

Amy Seitz, Executive Director

Alaska Farm Bureau, Inc.

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