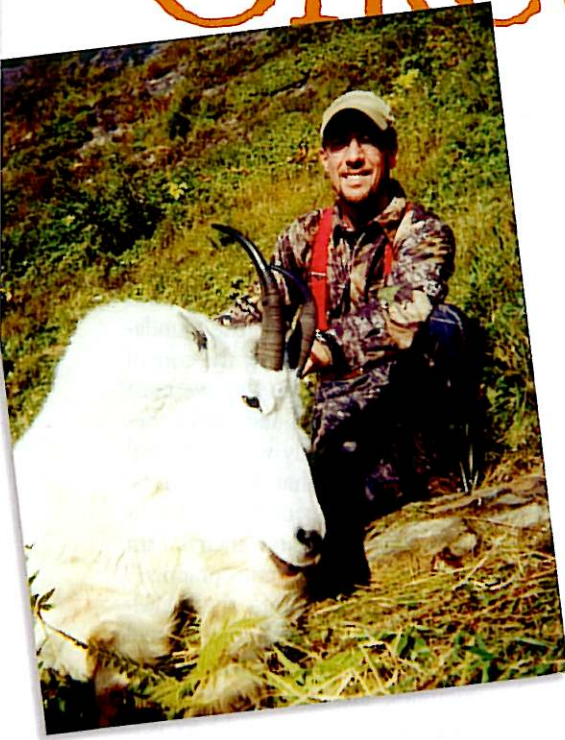


# Under the Right CIRCUMSTANCES



If possible, the shot at the Rocky Mountain goat was almost an anti-climax. The physical and mental demands combined with the thrill of this hunt were incredible.

The mental demands of my September 2004 Rocky Mountain goat hunt were challenged when I learned that Scott Newman of Southeast Guide Service had been mauled by a brown bear while hunting with a client in April. Scott's injuries would prevent him from guiding me in the fall. He offered options to either cancel the trip or hunt with his assistant guide Keegan McCarthy. I asked Scott what he would do if he were in my position, knowing Keegan's capability. Scott confirmed that he would go without question. The hunt was on!

By Fred W. Williams  
B&C Associate

Rain and fog delayed the start of the hunt for three days after I arrived in Petersburg, Alaska. Scott and I passed the time by sharing a lot of stories while drinking caramel breves from the local coffee shop. On September 8, the skies were clear and the wind was calm when Scott dropped Keegan, Brian (Scott's nephew), and me at the beach at 7 a.m.

**Fred's Rocky Mountain goat, which scores 51-4/8 points, has horns that both measure over 11 inches. It was the largest goat taken in Alaska in 2004 and ranks in the top 50 ever taken from that state.**

We were prepared to climb and spend several days in the wilderness. The climb



took us through dense Alaskan coastal rain forest complicated by dead falls and dense patches of thorny devil's club. Two goats caught our attention as we broke from the timber. They were several miles away and working their way down a sheer rock face to a bench below where we hoped to set up camp. The desire to get a closer look at the goats caused us to reach the top of the mountain and drop camp in record time: seven hours to cover six miles and climb almost 4,500 vertical feet.

After glassing goats in the surrounding area, we found the goats on the bench below camp. On our third attempt we were able to work to within 125 yards above a billy. He was asleep facing the alders on the edge of a sheer drop. Looking through the spotting scope at 40X, Keegan said the horns were "at least 9 inches long" but were obscured by the dark green leaves of the alder. He suggested that we "might want to look around at other goats in the area before taking this one." I said, "It's a beautiful sunny afternoon with rain predicted for tomorrow, and there's a trophy goat at 125 yards that doesn't know we're here. The circumstances are right."

After the shot, the goat never got up. In the process of whoops, high fives, and the happy dance, we watched as the second goat walked out, obviously wondering about the commotion. Thankfully, he was smaller. We were too excited to be overly concerned about how we'd get back up as we made our way down to what turned out to be an incredible goat. His horns proved to be "at least 9 inches long" as we stretched the tape measure to more than 11 inches, making him possibly the largest goat harvested in Alaska in 2004, and certainly scoring high in the Boone and Crockett All-time records.

The three of us scaling the face of the cliff with the load of goat meat and the full-body cape was probably the most daunting thing that I have experienced. Brian, in particular, got into some delicate situations where all Keegan and I could do was offer encouragement and hold our breath. Thankfully, we reached the top safely and made it to camp just as darkness settled in. We slept that night on top of the mountain without a tent. I lay there watching the stars disappear behind the clouds, thinking about a Boone and Crockett goat. I also

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hoped I would not have the weight of a wet sleeping bag to carry the next day. It threatened, but never rained as we climbed down to meet Scott at the beach the following afternoon. It started raining that evening as we celebrated a safe hunt and a magnificent goat.

As I finish this article I can't help but think how fortunate I am to have the freedom and physical ability to hunt and to experience the wilderness. Though I have harvested several outstanding animals, I continue to hunt for the total experience. Horns "at least 9 inches long" under the right circumstances were my goal. Beating the odds made the experience unforgettable. ■

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