

12.9.101 BIG GAME MANAGEMENT POLICY

(1) In order to properly manage the big game resource of Montana and to allow full hunter harvest of the recurring crops of big game, the following policy, outlining some of the primary objectives in big game management, is adopted:

(a) to produce and maintain a maximum breeding stock of big game on all suitable lands of Montana, public and private, in harmony with other uses of such lands, and consistent with the available forage supply, and to utilize, through public hunting, the available crop of big game produced annually by this breeding stock;

(b) to maintain for big game the best possible range conditions by keeping populations in balance with their forage supply with due consideration given to multiple land use, conflicting use, and other interests;

(c) to encourage harmonious relationships between landowners and hunters in order that big game can be produced and harvested on private lands, consistent with the capability and uses of the land;

(d) to permit the harvest of surplus big game and to control populations causing appreciable damage to cultivated crops and forest or range lands, by regulated public hunting when possible, and/or by permit hunting;

(e) to manage big game on the basis of natural forage without recourse to artificial feeding; the artificial feeding of big game will be discouraged and resorted to only in extreme emergency;

(f) to work out with interested parties an equitable allocation of forage for big game and livestock where conflict or competition exists; and thereafter to regulate big game populations according to such agreements insofar as possible, and which agreements may be subjected to future review and revision;

(g) to encourage big game predator control chiefly on understocked ranges or on ranges where hunters are able to fully utilize the annual harvestable crop of animals, or on ranges where the rarer species of big game (such as mountain sheep) are being introduced or remnant bands are being encouraged;

(h) to make impartial, objective surveys and investigations of big game populations and their range in order that authentic information may be available to guide the establishment of hunting regulations and other aspects of big game management;

(i) to encourage sport hunting and recreational use of the big game resource and public access to hunting areas;

(j) to keep hunting regulations clear and concise, consistent with requirements of the laws and regulations necessary to benefit the greatest numbers of hunters and conduct an orderly hunt. Regulations will be directed primarily to accomplish objectives of management.

History: Sec. [87-1-301](#) MCA; IMP, Sec. [87-1-201](#), [87-1-301](#) MCA; Eff. 12/31/72.