



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 5, 2019

Agenda Item: 2020-2021 Elk Hunting Seasons other than Shoulder Seasons and Hunting District Boundaries – **Commission-revised & Adopted Proposal**

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 Minutes

Background: Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted for most game species every other year between December and final adoptions in February. FWP proposes adopting the existing 2019 structure except for specific changes. **During its Dec. 5 meeting the commission voted to modify FWP's original proposal that had been posted online. FWP changes to its original proposals in response to commission direction are highlighted in yellow below.** This agenda item speaks largely to changes other than shoulder seasons. **Shoulder season changes are addressed in a separate agenda item.**

Among other proposed changes, there are several boundary changes combining hunting districts or portions of districts to simplify regulations and enhance management. Some of the more substantial changes are:

- Region 1 - HD boundary changes in the Flathead and Swan valleys and Bob Marshall. Remove 140-00 antlerless permit. Remove antlerless elk from the archery season in HDs 141, 150 & 151.
- Region 2 - HD boundary changes in the Upper Clark Fork and Philipsburg valleys. Remove brow-tined bull from general in HD 214 and add new bull permit. Remove HDs 210, 211, 212, 214 & 216 from the 002-00 OTC B license bundle. New antlerless permit in HDs 210, 211, 212 & 216. Remove a B license and B permit in HD 283. Shoulder seasons to end Jan. 15 region-wide.
- Region 3 - Standardize Youth and PTHFV to either-sex in archery and general seasons in most HDs. Numerous changes in B licenses and season dates. **Remove shoulder season in HDs 390 & 391 and add new OTC B license valid general rifle to Jan. 1.**
- Region 4 - HD boundary changes on the East Front (HDs 404, 421 & 444), Snowy (HDs 411 & 412) and Castle mountains (combine HDs 449 & 452). Make spike valid on the general license in HDs 411 & 412 to match HDs 511 & 530. New B license in HD 417. Add HDs 420, 425 & 455 to the 900-20 either-sex archery-only permit bundle **and increase quota to 4000. Remove shoulder seasons in HDs 411, 445 and 447 and add new B licenses in these HDs plus HDs 417 & 419 valid general rifle to Jan. 1.**
- Region 5 - Some changes in permit/B license quotas. **Remove shoulder seasons in all HDs except HD 500 and add new 595-00 B licenses valid general rifle to Jan. 1.**
- Region 6 - Several boundary changes that reduce nine HDs to five. Several changes in B licenses/permits reflecting HD boundary changes and reducing the number of license and permit types. Allow antlerless elk hunting with a general license in HDs 680 & 690 (proposed to be combined).

These and all proposed changes are on the commission master list and justifications are in the commission packet.

Public Involvement Process & Results: In addition to public comment on proposed elk season structure changes taken during the Dec. 5 commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 22, 2020. Any final adoptions will take place at the February 2020 commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis: Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions, or no change from 2019 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt for public comment the 2020 and 2021 elk hunting seasons other than shoulder seasons and hunting districts as presented by FWP, and that all other aspects of the elk season remain unchanged unless addressed in other proposals.