

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 11, 2016

Agenda Item: 2016-2017 Elk Hunting Seasons, Quota Ranges and HD Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 120 minutes

Background

Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially for most game species. This happens every other year between December and final adoptions in February. In proposing regulations to the Commission, FWP proposes adopting the existing (2015) structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

For the 2016 and 2017 elk-season structure, some of the more significant proposed changes include the establishment of early and/or late shoulder seasons in 43 hunting districts; establishing more liberal general season opportunities in many HDs; establishing two new hunting districts, HDs 217 and 451; and eliminating the 900-00 bundled B Licenses valid in many Regions 4, 5, and 7 HDs, and a proposal in HD 313 to limit BTB harvest. The final FWP proposals for Shoulder Seasons and HD 313 have been modified in response to public comment. No changes are proposed for the elk archery permit structure.

See the Elk Master List included in the Commission packet for all proposals.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Comments received during scoping included interest in antlerless opportunities, archery permits, and public/private land management. Public comment ran from Dec. 10 to Jan 22. We received over 700 comments: 551 via surveymonkey and 137 by mail or email, plus there were over 550 people who attended public meetings, many of whom provided comment. Many people in all venues commented more than once. Most comments had to do with shoulder seasons and HD 313 with the majority opposed to FWP's proposals in both cases. Most comments on HD 313 resulted from a campaign to encourage people to comment. Among 101 surveymonkey comments on HD 313 60% opposed and 40% favored FWP's proposal, while among 86 email comments 81% opposed while 19% favored. A similar campaign(s) was mounted concerning the shoulder seasons and among 316 surveymonkey and email comments 89% were opposed, particularly with the archery/rifle overlap. Other comments spoke to individual hunting districts and/or areas or general themes such as point restrictions, simplify regs, access, etc.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2015 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals is included in Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 10 Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the 2016 and 2017 Elk Hunting Seasons, Quota Ranges, and Hunting Districts Boundaries as presented by FWP.