

## ***FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** December 10, 2015

**Agenda Item:** 2016-2017 Bison Hunting Seasons and HD Boundaries

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Proposed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 20 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 bison season, structure changes include eliminating the separate time periods for licenses and making licenses valid for the entire season for both the Gardiner and West Yellowstone hunting districts. For the Gardiner-Absaroka Beartooth hunting district 385 FWP proposes introducing cow/calf licenses and a consequent reduction of either-sex licenses, and introducing either-sex backcountry licenses in the Absaroka Beartooth portion. All other aspects of the 2015 regulations are to remain unchanged. All of these changes are referenced in the Bison Master List in the Commission packet.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

Bison season comments were received during scoping and included interest in more hunting opportunity and allocation of harvest among non-tribal/tribal hunters. In addition to public comment at the Dec. 10 Commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 22, 2016. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb. 11, 2016 Commission meeting.

### **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 for public comment the 2016 and 2017 Bison Hunting Seasons and Hunting Districts as presented by FWP.