

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 7, 2017

Agenda Item: 2018-2019 Elk Hunting Seasons and Hunting District Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

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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 (2017) structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

In general, the proposed 2018 and 2019 elk season structure offers more liberal opportunities, simplification of regulations and more consistent season dates for shoulder seasons with an eye to simplification and harvesting more elk in over-objective districts. Changes include many more opportunities statewide with a general license; more and expanded opportunities with B Licenses or antlerless permits, Permits to Hunt From a Vehicle in Region 1; establishing a regional B License and seven new shoulder seasons in Region 2; additional B License opportunity in Region 3; two new shoulder seasons and consistent dates in Region 4; one new shoulder season and all shoulder season dates in Region 5 to run from 8/15 to 2/15; and more opportunities in Regions 6 and 7.

FWP also proposes to adopt elk season structure for the 43 hunting districts that had shoulder seasons in 2016 on an annual basis rather than biennial to facilitate evaluation of their efficacy and revisiting their adoption on a 3-year cycle.

All proposed changes are on the Commission Elk Master List and season justifications are in the Commission packet.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Elk season comments were received during the Aug. 20 – Sept. 21 scoping and included interest in antlerless opportunities, special muzzleloader and senior citizen seasons, access, and comments both pro and con on shoulder seasons. In addition to public comment on proposed elk season structure changes taken during the Dec. 7 Commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m. Jan. 24, 2018. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb. 2018 Commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2017 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals are included in Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 7 Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt for public comment the 2018 and 2019 elk hunting seasons and hunting districts as presented by FWP, and that all other aspects remain unchanged unless addressed in other proposals.